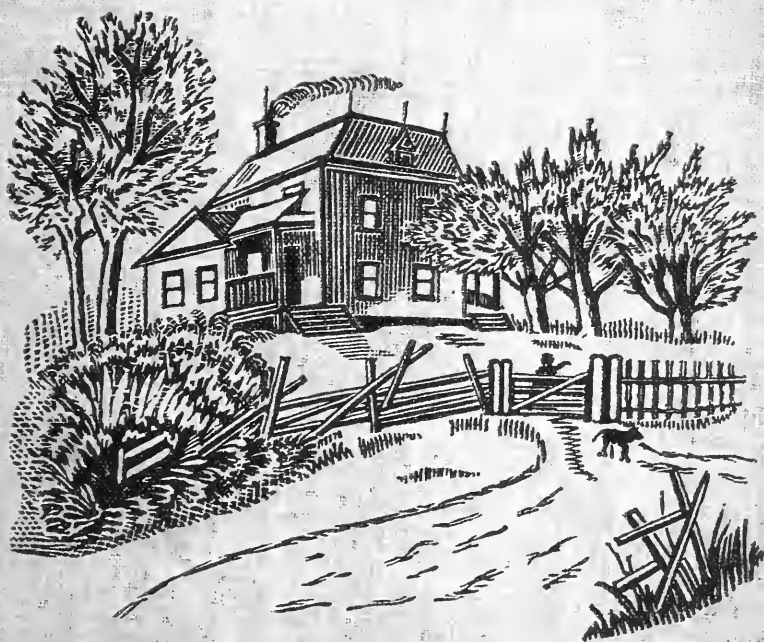


THE HIP-ROOF HOUSE

ALBION W. TOURGEE

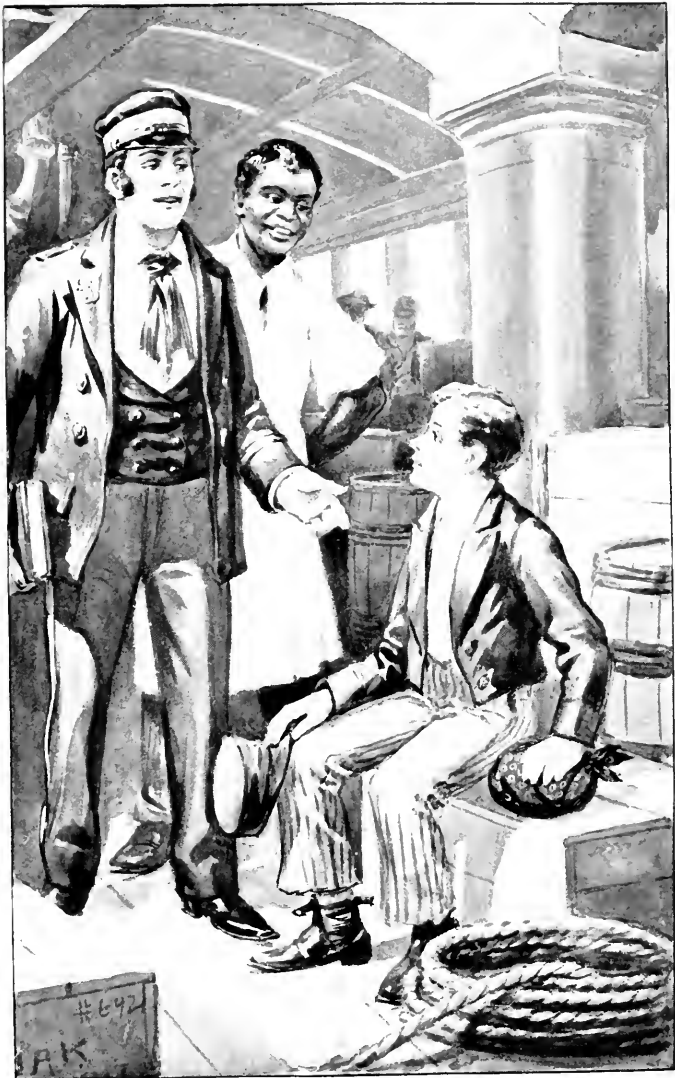








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First Experience on the Boat.

See page 52.

THE MORTGAGE ON THE HIP-ROOF HOUSE

BY

ALBION W. TOURGÉE

AUTHOR OF

"A FOOL'S ERRAND," "MURVALE EASTMAN," "OUT OF THE
SUNSET SEA," "THE WAR OF THE STANDARDS," ETC.



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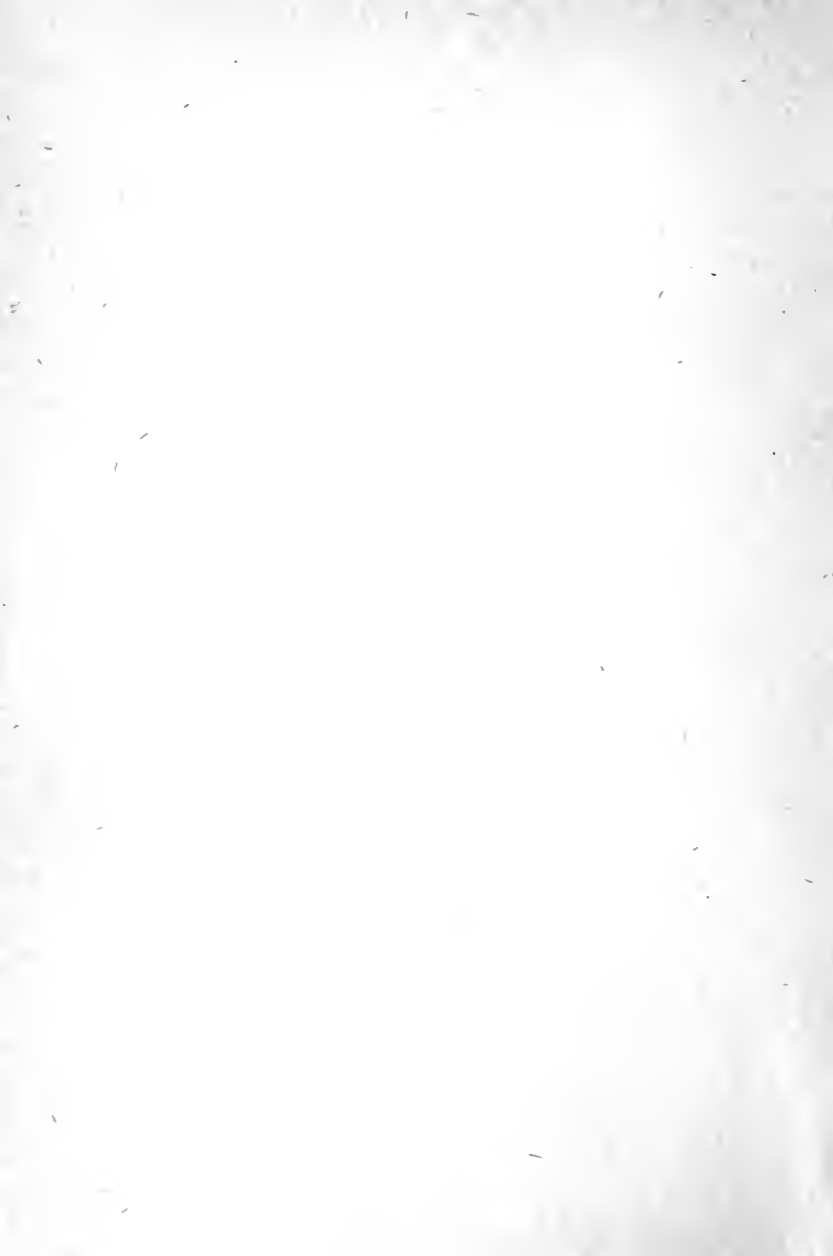
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THE MORTGAGE ON THE
HIP-ROOF HOUSE.



THE MORTGAGE ON THE HIP-ROOF HOUSE.

Chapter I.

FRENCH SORREL.

“IT’S a mighty back’ard spring, Joey.”

“I s’pose ’t is, Daddy Waugh. That was what Mr. Perkins said to-day; but it do n’t seem to me as if our garden was ever any forwarder than ’t is this year. Just about every thing is up, and there ain’t a weed in it. I’ve got ye a good mess of that big French sorrel you ’re so fond of for supper. It won’t be long ’fore we shall have some sort of garden-stuff every day, now. Ain’t that nice?”

The boy—a sturdy lad of fifteen, with dark-blue eyes, and short, brown hair curling about his brow—held towards the decrepit figure in

an old arm-chair, a bowl full of the large, light-green leaves of what he correctly termed French sorrel, the *Rumex scutata* of the botanists, which was deservedly a favorite dish with our fathers, though few of the present generation ever tasted it.

"That is nice, Joey," said the old man, peering eagerly at it through his glasses, lifting the broad leaves carefully in his trembling fingers, and letting them fall back, one by one, into the dish. "I do n't remember as I ever see bigger leaves 'n that, for a first cuttin', anywhere."

The boy's face flushed with pleasure.

"You see, I took particular care of it, knowing how you liked it, daddy," he said, speaking in that loud tone one gets accustomed to using, who has much intercourse with people whose hearing is impaired.

"Of' course, you must have done that; but you need n't holler at me so. It 's a drefful bad habit you 're gettin' into, Joey,—'long o' living with me, I 'spose, though I ain't deaf, not to say deaf, that is, Joey; only a leetle dull of hear-

in', so to speak. I think I hear jest about ez well ez ever, when I 'm thinkin' 'bout listenin', you know; when my mind 's on what a body 's talkin' about, ez you may say."

The old man spoke in that plaintive tone of self-defense in which age seeks to excuse its infirmities. Joe knew the tone, also the remedy, and applied it promptly.

"That 's so, daddy. I 've noticed it more 'n a hundred times. If you 're thinking 'bout what any one 's saying, seems as if you heard what was said almost 'fore they could git the words out."

"That 's just the way 't is, when my mind 's on it; but you see, settin' here all day, and the bigger part of the night, too, most of the time I git kind o' wrapped up in my thoughts, and I s'pose, really, it takes quite a clap to git me out of 'em."

"Well—a little—sometimes, daddy," replied the boy, cautiously and cheerfully.

He had drawn out the table as they talked, and was busy setting it for the evening meal.

The table was of white rock-maple of a very peculiar grain, supported on two pairs of crossed legs connected by braces running from the top of one set to the bottom of the other, on each side. Across each end was nailed a narrow strip of that beautiful wood, the sycamore, the soft, reddish surface of which, dotted with minute yellow scales, contrasted pleasantly with the snowy maple. The whole was spotlessly clean, and bore evidence of that peculiar finish which only years of use and frequent scouring can confer. Looking at the edges, one could see that the boards had been worn thinner in the middle than at either end. The boy took some blue-edged plates with curious dragon-figures in the middle, and some little horn-handled knives and forks, the former thin and narrow, from a cupboard in the corner of the room, and placed them on the table.

The old man put out his hand, moving his fingers gently along the polished surface.

"I guess the old table'll outlast me yet," he said, querulously. "It's stood a good while,

and is just as stiddy on its legs as it was the day 't was made. That was Lowiza's birthday. Sawed the boards with a hand-saw out of a tree we cut down by the spring. That 's why the boards are so narrer; I had to split it, you see, 'cause I could n't rip through the whole log. It ain't a bad lookin' table yet."

"It's the prettiest curly-maple I ever saw," said the boy.

"Curly? Do n't call that curly-maple, Joe. How many times have I got to tell ye that ain't curly-maple, but bird's-eye? Do 'n ye see them leetle white specks with the dark edges? Them 's the eyes. That 's bird's-eye maple, an' about the prettiest piece of wood I ever saw. 'T won't make no difference, though, when other folks come to git it, whether it 's curled or bird's-eye—handsome or homely. It 's out o' fashion, and only fit for the cellar or the garret."

The boy noted the plaintive tone, and spoke up, cheerfully,—

"A little sugar and a touch of vinegar will

make this sorrel right toothsome, daddy. It's first-rate with bread and butter," he continued, as he bustled about his duties.

"I used to like it in my young days," said the old man, sadly, "and Lowiza in particular set great store by it. When we moved to this country she brought them very roots along with her, them and some posy plants and things, from the old home-place back in Berkshire—in a little bag she hardly let go out of her sight all the way. I used to tell her over 'n often that the bigger part of our comfort here come out of that bag. You see she was that thoughtful that she had saved up pips of all the best sorts of apples in her father's orchard, and all the country round for that matter, and the same with pears and plums. She had little slips of currants and gooseberries, too, that grew, when we come to set them out, as if they had been rooted for years, and we've got them in the garden now. It's jest wonderful how much good can be got out of a little, if one's keerful and knowin'."

"Grandma must have been a very careful woman," said the boy.

"Keerful? Why, we had n't hardly got the logs out for the house 'fore she wanted a place cleared for a garden; so we cut down that bit of rich flat below the spring, and burned it off, and set out her little bundle of roots, an' planted a few seeds. I remember we laughed a good deal about one little yaller piece of madder-root that we wuz all sure would n't amount to nothin'. But, law sakes, there was n't room enough in the whole clearin' to set out what we got from it the next year.

"That's more 'n forty years ago, Joey. The orchard has nigh about all come from them seeds and slips, an' the garden's been on that same piece of ground ever sence. I don't s'pose ther's a better acre of land in the whole country than that piece of black sile round the spring. I've put a many a day's work on it, Joey, an' it never's failed to give me back good intrust on all it's had. That an' the old orchard and the bits of medder-land below the

barn are worth as much as a gold-mine, ef one only hed the strength to take keer on 'em an' work 'em ez they ought to be worked."

"That's jst what Mr. Perkins was a-sayin' to-day," returned the boy, cheerfully. "He said he did n't know anywhere in all the country round another ten acres as good as ours."

"He did, eh?" said the old man, snappishly. "Where'd you see 'Siah Perkins, to have so much talk with him to-day?"

"Down at the garden, daddy; I hain't been nowhere else," answered the boy, in surprise.

"An' the sneakin' varmint was down there, was he?"

The boy looked across the table at the old man, in amazement.

"Why do n't ye answer my question?" asked the latter, sharply.

"You—you—you mean—Mr. Perkins?" dubiously.

"Of course, I mean 'Siah Perkins. If ther's

a meaner, more contemptible varmint anywhere round, I do n't know it."

Killis Waugh smote the white, uneven floor with his cane very spitefully as he said this, and his mild face was flushed with anger. The boy looked at him in silent wonder for a moment. Then he stammered out, as if compelled to say something:

"Yes, sir, I—I did n't know, sir." The hesitant, apologetic tone attracted the old man's attention, even in the midst of his wrath.

"No more you did n't, sonny," he said, kindly. "There, there, do n't you go to feelin' bad now. I did n't mean to be so fractious-like. The fact is, Joe, I've had a good deal to bear up under lately, an' had to bear it all alone."

"Could n't I help you, Daddy Waugh?" asked Joe, coming round the table and laying his hand on the old man's shoulder, while he gazed into his face with eyes full of tears.

"You're a good boy, Joey, a good boy, and

you 've done all a boy of your age could do to keep things agoin', but this is 'way beyond your strength, child."

"I 'm a pretty stout boy, daddy," said Joe, smiling manfully through his tears.

"So you be, Joe, so you be, an' a willin' one, an' a brave one, too. There ain't no doubt o' that. If it had n't been for you, I do n't know how we 'd ever have got along sence my last stroke. You could n't 'a' done better ef you 'd been my own son, an' I do n't s'pose, if the truth was known, that the only son I had would have done anything like as well. Jake was a good boy, kind uv hot-tempered like his mother, and a little inclined to be slacksy like—wal, like his fayther. He worked hard 'nough when he was a boy, but he was n't thrifty an' managin' as you 've been sence ye've hed everything on yer shoulders."

"O, Daddy Wagh, I 'm sure he 'd have done a great deal better 'n I. I only wish he 'd been here, instead of me," sobbed the boy, bravely ignoring the praise bestowed upon his acts.

"Jake was a good, high-sperrited boy, and he grew up into a brave, high-sperrited man. If he had lived I think he 'd 'a' been a credit to the country as well as to his parents. But it was n't to be. He was jest gittin' a start when he died, an' left his wife a-dyin' of consumption, an' 'Cindy a little tot less 'n three years old. He was in debt some, which was nateral enough, jest when he was buildin' up his biznis, ye know, an' Lowizy an' I agreed that, though we wa'nt in no way bound fer his debts, it was n't proper that anybody should suffer loss by our only child while we had a plenty an' every year a leetle to spare.

"So I took up the load that Providence seemed to hev ordered for me to carry, never once thinkin' it would git ez heavy as it 's bin the last few years. Of course, Lucindy—the child hain't come in yit, has she?" he asked, hastily lowering his voice, and looking towards the door opening into another room.

"No," said Joe, confidently, "she was going to stay to supper with Matilda Mason, and come home in the evening. That 's the reason I was

getting supper. I declare, I'd almost forgot I was getting it, too."

"Never mind now, Joey, I want to tell ye about this matter, an' I 'spect I better do it afore Lucindy comes. It'll be hard enough for her, anyhow."

"Now, daddy, do n't you be troublin' 'bout 'Cindy. She ain't as old as I am, but I tell you, daddy, she's smart. There ain't no dodgin' that. Tain't only what she does, but what she thinks, that counts. When you come to see what we've done and how we've got along this spring, Daddy Waugh, I'm sure you'll get over your bad feelings. I would n't never have thought of half the things nor of half the handy ways of doin' 'em that she did. And you must remember we're going to be stronger and better able to take care of you every year from now on. I'll get your go-cart fixed up before Sunday, and take you out to see how well everything is getting along."

"Do n't, do n't, child," said the old man, with a pathetic gesture; "you jest make it

harder for me, Joey.” There was an indescribable wail in his voice as he spoke. “Joey, ’t ain’t no use. I thought maybe we ’d weather it through, you an’ ’Cindy are so helpful an’ good, but ’t ain’t no use. We’ve jest got to give up. It seems as if I’d had nothing but bad luck since Jacob died. It kind of broke Lowizy’s sperit, the boy dyin’ an’ havin’ to pay his debts, or engage to pay ’em, an’ the first I knew she went, too. Then the crops was bad an’ I had to sell one piece of land after another to meet the notes. After awhile Perkins somehow persuaded me to put money into a speculation he was a startin’, or at least to give my note for it. He said the business would be sure to pay long afore the note come due. I did n’t have Lowizy to advise with or I should n’t ’a’ done it, I s’pose. I signed the note, though, and by and by, when it come due, I had to mortgage what there was left of the old place to meet it. That was ’bout the time of my first stroke or a leetle afore that. You remember it, do n’t ye, Joey?”

"Yes, daddy," said the boy, soothingly.

"Wal, everything went on from bad to worse attar that. I was totterish an' unsteadily, an' had to hire everything done that was done. I sold off the land, leetle by leetle, to make the payments an' keep down the intrust, an' we lived on the scraps that was left over. This last year or two, you an' 'Cindy have managed so well I begun to hope we'd git along an' save what's left of the old place; but 'tain't no use, Joey; 'tain't no use."

"Has anything happened lately, daddy?" asked the boy, tenderly smoothing back the scanty locks upon the old man's brow.

"Yes, Joey, the very worst has happened that could; I b'lieve I could bear it myself, if it was n't for you and 'Cindy. 'T would n't hurt me so very much goin' to the county-house, 'cause it would n't be for long, you know. But I did want to see you an' 'Cindy grow up till you was able to help yourselves. I wanted to see you livin' in the hip-roofed house, too, both

on ye, if it should please God you should be so minded. You see my heart 's sot on the old place. I can't think of it goin' to strangers. You ain't no relation to me as I know of, Joey, but as I said, an own son could n't have been no better to me, an' I did want you to live in Daddy Waugh's house till you was ready to go into yer own, unless you an' 'Cindy could agree to keep right on here."

"Won't you tell me what 's a-worrying you now, daddy?" asked the boy, with a flush on his face.

"It 's jest this, Joey: that air scoundrel, 'Siah Perkins, has bought that mortgage. Squire Sanderson, that used to hold it, did n't never press for his money. He knew 't was secure, and only wanted the intrust. Sometimes he waited fer that, if times was too hard for me. But he died a few months ago, ye know, an' the administrator he sold the note, as of course he had to, in settlin' up the estate, an' that sneakin', low-lived 'Siah Perkins

bought it. He was here to-day, an' says he 's got to have the money inside of three months or he 'll foreclose."

"What 's that, daddy?"

"Why, sell the place to pay the debt, ye know."

"Can he do that?"

"Yes, he kin do it, son, though I guess he 'd have to bring suit first to find out jest how much was comin' on the mortgage. Anyway, I calculate it would be about October afore he could git a hold of it himself, an' that I guess is about his estimate, too. He waited till you got the spring's work pretty well done, and probably counts on gittin' the hay-crop an' the apples."

"It 's a shame!" said the boy, hotly. "The orchard is as full as it can be, and there ain't hardly any other trees round here bearin' this year. How much is the debt, daddy?"

"Ez near 'z I can calculate it, intrust 'n all, it must be in the neighborhood of three hun-

dred an' fifty dollars. It can't be any more 'n that, nohow."

"But he said to-day the place was worth a thousand dollars," said the boy, in surprise.

"Of course," exclaimed the old man, bitterly. "That 's the reason he wants to get it. He knows I can't raise the money, and I 'spect he 's afraid to wait longer for fear you may get able to help me after a while. I do n't s'pose I ought to have called him hard names, Joey, but it is a mean trick."

"Why, the apples 'll pay mighty near half of it, the way things are likely to be in the fall," said Joe, indignantly.

"I 'd thought of that, my son; but then there 'd be the other half. It ain't no use to lift one end of the log an' not stir the other." The old man's tone was hopeless.

"It seems as if there ought to be some way—as if somebody would help you, Daddy Waugh," said the boy, meditatively.

"It would seem so, Joey; but you know I 've

been as good ez dead fer nigh on to four years, and the world forgits the dead wonderful quick, my son. It hardly knows I'm alive, now I can't git around. No, I've thought it all over, an' there ain't no way out only jest to let him sell."

"And what then?" asked Joe.

"Wal, I take it the place 'll bring a leetle more 'n the mortgage in spite of the hard times. This 'll keep you 'n 'Cindy 'long till you're able to help yourselves."

"And you, daddy—what 'll become of you?"

"O, I 'll go to the county-house. It 's a comfortable place, and Mr. Wilcox 'll take good keer on me while ther 's any need for 't."

"Daddy Waugh," said the boy, impetuously, "do n't you say another word. You ain't never goin' to the county house while 'Cindy 'n me are alive."

"That he ain't!" came in a shrill tone from the doorway, and a bright-faced girl rushed across the room and threw herself on the old man's neck in a passion of tears.

Chapter II.

THE HIP-ROOF HOUSE, AND ITS INMATES.

THE Hip-roof House stood on the north side of the ancient thoroughfare that followed the undulating shore-line of Lake Erie from Buffalo to Toledo, along which the stages ran in the period immediately preceding the railway epoch. It was of somewhat pretentious design—the upright portion, which stood with its gable towards the highway, having been flanked by two wings, each with a porch in front. One of these now constituted the living-room of the family. It opened both into the parlor, a great half-furnished apartment, which occupied the whole front of the upright part, and the kitchen, an almost equally spacious room in the rear, with a stairway between. The roof of the main part, which had given a name to the house, was really a curb-roof; that is, the line of the rafters was broken

at the purline, making a roof with double pitch, the lower much more sharply inclined than the upper. They have become common in modern times under the name of French roofs, or mansards. In some parts of the country they were formerly known as Dutch roofs. In the region of which we write they were very rare, so that the Hip-roof House was a landmark to the traveler by stage between the great East and the greater West. A half-mile away the ridge-road was intersected by one from the southward; the village lay a mile to the west and five miles beyond was the harbor, whose light showed at night over the intervening low ground. The house was at the top of a sandy hill, and the meadows in its rear sloped to the northwestward. A spring, famous through all the country round, burst out of the hillside, fifty yards below the house and midway between it and the barn. To the west lay the garden. The house had once been painted red, and still showed red in the landscape, but near at hand betrayed the ravages of time. House,

garden, and barn were all imbedded, as it were, in the orchard. Garden, meadow, barnyard, lane, all were fringed and studded with trees—apple, pear, plum, cherry, and a few old and scraggy peach trees.

This was the domain of Killis Waugh. The name no doubt had been intended Achilles, but the Yankee tongue had made it "Killis," and the spelling had conformed to pronunciation. He was an old man, past seventy. He had lived for half a century on the spot where the Hip-roof House stood. He had cut away the forest, planted the orchard, built the house, grown prosperous and forehanded, if not exactly rich, in his prime, and now in his old age, reduced almost to want, still clung to the remnant of the homestead he had carved out of the primeval forest. The farm had shrunk from two hundred acres to ten. These, with the "rights, privileges, and appurtenances thereunto belonging," and the incumbrances thereto attaching, constituted his sole estate.

Four years before had come his first "stroke,"

as he called it, following hard upon the death of his wife. It had left a sluggishness of limb which allowed him to move about with difficulty, but forbade any considerable amount of physical labor. He had been what is termed a "handy" man in his earlier days, however, and with the aid of a few tools and a turning-lathe, which he had made years before, he continued to contribute something toward the support of the little family—more, perhaps, than he would have done had he been able to attend to the cultivation of the tiny farm. The land had been worked "on shares" until its shrinking dimensions made it insufficient for the support of a tenant. After that, it had been "let out" in patches, or the work done "by the job" by parties who were glad to take their pay in the plain but honest work that came from the old man's hands. His second stroke, coming two years after the first, had chained him to his chair without impairing, to any great extent, his mental power or manual dexterity.

Killis Waugh was a man of more than ordi-

nary intelligence, one of those to be found in most country neighborhoods, whose delight it is to attend to the public duties which are sure to be thrust upon them. For more years than fall to an ordinary life he had been a justice of the peace, trustee of the township and Church, director of the district school, and general adviser of the neighborhood. Attentive as he was to others' interests, his own would have fared poorly, even in his prime, but for the thrifty energy of his wife. Owing to her prudent management, and the enhancement of values in the region where they lived, they had accumulated the comfortable property which was dissipated by their son's misfortune and their honorable efforts to redeem his name from the opprobrium of debt. With his misfortune had come the sense of being forgotten, which naturally follows retirement from the communal life which characterizes all new communities. The exclusion from public affairs had come very gradually, but seemed to the warm-hearted old man a real death in life. Gradually,

but certainly, his world had narrowed to the two children, whose benefactor he had once hoped to be, but to whom he now bitterly believed he had become a burden.

Up to his last stroke, Daddy Waugh would probably have counted among the incumbrances of the Hip-roof House the two young people who lived alone with him, and were, in fact, the stay of his life. Lucinda Waugh was the bequest of his unfortunate son, and, despite his misfortunes, the old man had never intimated by word or look that the tall, graceful girl, now budding into womanhood, had ever been a burden. She and her boy playmate, indeed, had seemed the children of their old age to the kindly couple whose care they had received, and this kindness had borne a rich fruitage of devotion in their young hearts. Their lives had not been especially hard. They had never known want, and the frugal life about them had made them unconscious even of poverty. They had grown old somewhat beyond their years by the necessity for self-direction which

had fallen upon them, and bore perhaps a more intimate relation to each other than they would have done but for this common burden of responsibility.

Joe Thompson had come curiously enough into Daddy Waugh's household. A man drawing a rude cart, containing a few necessary articles and furnishing a means of transportation for a sturdy boy of three years old, had stopped at the farm-house one sultry summer evening, and asked for a night's lodging. It was long before the days of tramps, and in that region no door was ever closed to one asking shelter or refreshment. The favor was accorded in this case all the more readily because the wayfarer seemed worn with fatigue, and the pallid face, great mournful eyes, and transparent hands told of a frame enfeebled by disease. During the evening the stranger told the outlines of his story. He had married a young wife against the wishes of her parents in one of the Eastern States, and taken her to the great West to seek their fortunes. It was a story all too common in that

day. The fortune which they sought, eluded all their efforts. The frail young wife soon succumbed to the burthens of maternity, hardship, and want. The father struggled on until assured that the end was near and inevitable. His poverty forbade his traveling by any public conveyance, and so he started on foot to comply with his dying wife's request, and take their child to her father's home on the New England hillside. He had crossed one State and almost reached the eastern boundary of another. There were only two more—two and a day's journey into a third—and his task would be complete. He hoped to live to see the end. He must live, he would live, to see that time, he said, with a strange light in his wan eyes. After that, he wanted nothing more. If he could only know that his boy would be cared for, he could die, and go to her who, he was sure, still loved and watched over him. This was his story.

Killis Waugh and his wife listened with sympathetic tears. The stranger retired early. He was weary and worn. He wished to start

before the sun rose, to avoid the dust and heat. Ere the morning dawned his journey was ended. The man had felt so sure of living to perform his task that he had left no written directions by which another could finish it in case of his default. He had told his story without giving names. That peculiar reticence which always leads those of New England stock to hide with zealous care whatever may be thought unpleasant or discreditable with regard to themselves or family, had sealed his mouth to everything but the outlines of his sad story.

Killis Waugh and his brave wife did not shrink at the added burden imposed on their old age. Their son's child was already installed in the cradle, but this waif of the go-cart was not denied a home. There were not wanting those who declared that, by refusing to send the unknown foundling to the county-house, the worthy couple were only rendering more certain and speedy their own journey thither. To such Killis Waugh had but one reply:

"Sho, sho! His folks 'll probably find him in

the course of a year or so, and in the meantime, you know, it's only a little more water in the porridge. You see we've got one baby on our hands, and it's just as easy or a little easier, to take care of two than one."

So it was that Joe Thompson became a denizen of the Hip-roof House, and grew up to enter an emphatic protest against Daddy Waugh's proposal to surrender its possession. After a few days the enthusiasm of the young people began to infect the old man also. At any rate, the few neighbors who called to see what steps would be taken as to the sale of the property, which was regarded as certain, now that Josiah Perkins had made demand for his money, were surprised to find that its occupants expected to continue in possession despite the mortgagee's demand.

"I'll tell you what, daddy," said Joe, stoutly, after every phase of the question had been discussed again and again, "'Siah Perkins ain't goin' to git the Hip-roof House. You just make your mind easy 'bout that. You're goin'

to live in it as long as you want to, and after that 'Cindy and me are goin' to live in it by ourselves. Ain't that so, 'Cindy?'

"I—I guess so, Joe," said the girl, not over confidently.

"Well, I know it," asserted the boy.

"But how—how are you goin' to manage it, Joey?" queried the old man, anxious for a chance to believe.

"Well, I do n't exactly know just how," said the boy; "but I 'm goin' to find a way. I think, the first thing, I 'll go and see Lawyer Marvin, over to the village, and find out if we can't hold on until after apple-harvesting. Then, I 'll go on the Lake, and leave 'Cindy to take care of you and look after things during the summer."

"Law, child, what 'll that amount to! Wages ain't nothin', an' there 's two men to every place, let alone boys. What do you suppose you could earn, if you had a place?"

"O, if I had a place I could get a good deal—as much as four or five dollars a month. That 's what Frank Bidwell gets, and he is n't

much bigger than I am, and never set foot on a boat before this year."

"Five dollars a month! What would that come to?" the old man queried, despondingly.

"It's something, grandpa," said 'Cindy, cheeringly. "It'll pay the interest, anyhow."

"Probably 't would if we only had somebody to take the mortgage up, and wait till we could pay it by littles."

"If we do n't begin earning we'll never begin paying," said the boy, sententiously.

"But the Lake ain't no fit place for you, Joey. It's a hard life with rough people. I could n't think of yer goin' on one of them big boats, Joey."

"I s'pose a big boat ain't no worse 'n a little one," replied Joe; "and they pay more, and there's more likely to be a chance there than anywhere else. So, I'm going."

"Well," said the old man, "if you must, you must. I wonder if you could n't get a place with Davy Moxom?"

“Who is he, daddy?”

“Hain’t ye never heard me tell of Davy Moxom?”

“You don’t mean the one that chored for you once?”

“Of course I do.”

“Where is he now?”

“Why, he’s Captain of the Queen of the West.”

“Him that the sailors call ‘Old Ironsides?’ ”

“I presume so; that ’s what the boys used to call him when he went to the Academy.”

“Is he so very crusty, grandpa?”

It was ‘Cindy who asked. Joe was in a brown study.

“Crusty? No,—just kind o’ serious-like. They called him ‘Old Ironsides’ because the only piece he would ever speak at school was about that ship. How did it begin? I remember the first time I ever saw it, same as if ’t was yesterday. It was somewhere about the time Davy Moxom was boardin’ here. Queer

I can't remember it. Let me see. It begun something like this:

'Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high;
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky.'

There was n't but two or three verses, but Davy was powerful fond of it, and spoke it every time it came his turn. They used to say he got it off in fine style. So the boys gave him the nickname. From what they say of him sence, they were n't far wrong, neither. He was a born sailor, though, if ever there was one."

"Daddy Waugh," spoke up Joe, with sharp emphasis.

"Yes, Joe, I hear ye. 'T ain't no need to holler at me so."

"Could n't you write a letter to Captain Moxom, asking him to take me on his boat if there's a place?"

"'T ain't at all likely there is, my son," answered the old man, gravely.

"Won't never know unless we try."



Return from the Village.

"True, true. Why, yes, I s'pose I could. 'T ain't no ways sartin' he 'd pay any attention to it though." Yet it was evident the idea pleased him.

"He can't any more 'n say 'no,'" said the boy, "and I'm going to try him, anyhow. Do you s'pose Mr. Marvin knows him?"

"I can't be right sure, my son, but I think it more 'n likely they was at school together. They 're jest about of an age, I should say, or not fur from it. Let me see, it must be near twenty years sence he was here. I s'pose he 's forgot all about me by this time."

"You jest write the letter, daddy, and I'll find out."

The next day Joe visited the village, and returned with the welcome intelligence that Perkins could not obtain possession by foreclosure before November, and that it was quite possible some one might be found to take up the mortgage and continue the loan. The lawyer had approved the boy's resolution, and cheerfully given him a letter to Captain Moxom,

though telling him frankly that he did not think any number of letters would be of service with "Old Ironsides." Encouraged by this success, the old man prepared his letter, and Joe, with the two missives in his pocket, started to board the boat commanded by Captain Moxom, the most relentless disciplinarian who ever sailed "the Lakes."

Chapter III.

THE QUEEN OF THE WEST.

I T was three o'clock in the morning when Joe reached the harbor. The Queen of the West was expected at daylight. It was May, but the air was raw out on the pier, against which the waves splashed sullenly, for a steady swell came creeping in under the light fog, though there was no wind. Joe shivered as he waited, clinging to his little bundle. Two or three schooners were in the harbor, taking on or discharging cargo. No one was astir aboard them at that hour. Their rigging creaked and rattled as they rose and fell with the waves. Joe noted everything, and felt homesick at the outset. He had often been at the harbor, but it looked very strange in the dim misty morning. There were a number of passengers waiting for the incoming steamer in the bar-room of the tavern at the end of the wharf, and several men lying

asleep among the loose freight. Joe wondered why they should choose such a place to sleep. One of the travelers waiting for the steamer told him they were sailors, and drunk. Joe shuddered, and almost wished that he had not come.

Suddenly out of the mist and the waves sprang the steamer. It seemed like a great, malignant monster bearing down upon the little town with full intent to raze and destroy. Black smoke poured out of its two great pipes, the engine puffed and roared, and the tall wheel-house rose above three spacious but almost deserted decks. There came the bellow of escaping steam, the straining of ropes, the clangor of command, the rush of noisy feet, a crowd of eager passengers, the steady rumble of barrels and boxes rolled and thrown from boat to dock, and from dock to boat, cries, curses, and that overwhelming confusion that reduces the individual to a nonentity—that confusion which is really imperious

order, being only the eager struggle of many for a common purpose.

The Queen of the West was a marvel. Her paddle-wheels were said to be wider and higher than any that had ever been built before, and it is an historical fact that none have rivaled them since. Thirty-two feet from rim to rim, and eleven feet from edge to edge were those instruments of her matchless speed. She represented a curious rebellion against the accepted laws of marine mechanics. Though built for speed, she was wide and flat, rather than long and narrow; and though traversing some of the worst waters in the world, her woodwork was of singular lightness. Though intended for passengers, she carried an immense amount of freight, not regularly packed in a closed and battened hold, but heaped indiscriminately, it seemed, between her decks. But with all her incongruities, the Queen of the West was worthy of her fame and the patronage she received. Whatever might have been her de-

fects, she was admirably adapted for speed and comfort on the choppy waves of the great lakes. Her hull was staunch, and her cabins and saloons would even at this day be thought luxurious. Everybody knew that if her fires were put out, her engine disabled, or her great paddle-wheels broken in mid-lake, she would be at the mercy of wind and wave; and nowhere in the world are winds more furious or waves more pitiless than on these blue unsalted waters which the ocean sailor affects to despise. Everybody said that sooner or later her time would come. Yet she went on her way year after year, bearing thousands of precious lives in safety. Her owners laughed at croakers, and pointed to the fact that she had never lost a passenger, been compelled to throw over a pound of freight, or tie up a single day for repairs. The argument from experience always overpowers the reasoning based on analogy. So the public not only patronized the Queen of the West, but were as proud of her achievements as her owners and crew themselves. The fare was excellent, the

officers obliging, the accommodations of the best, and the boat always on time. Who wonders the traveling public regulated their goings and comings by her trips? In those days of dirt and discomfort, neatness, dispatch, and courtesy were qualities worth considering.

There was an element of the Queen's success, however, which did not depend on her builder's skill or faithfulness; Captain David Moxom commanded her. Born upon the shore of one of the great lakes, he had heard in boyhood the echo of Perry's guns, and had seen the battered fleet and its still worse battered prizes, when they sought the shelter of a friendly lee soon after the fight. The sight caught his boyish fancy, and gave him not only inclination for life afloat, but aspiration for command. Early left dependent on his own exertions for support, he went on the lakes during the summer, and attended school during the winter while navigation was closed. He came to be acquainted with Daddy Waugh through having "chored" for him while attending a school of repute in

the neighboring village. This school was taught by a master who had not only received a classical education, but, what was of far more value to young Moxom, had, by some freak of fortune, been for a time a seafaring man. Of him, the "chore-boy" learned figures, accounts, and something of navigation. This was his education—a good solid basis on which he thereafter built, by reading and observation, more broadly than might have been expected. He was a fresh-water sailor of a type by no means rare in that region thirty or forty years ago, as unlike the ordinary nautical man as can well be imagined, yet by no means to be despised for lack of seamanship.

David Moxom was a quiet man, whose few words were spoken in calm, even tones. He had little need of strength in the position he now occupied; but every sailor on the lakes knew by experience or tradition the power of his right arm. He was a rigid disciplinarian, though there was none of the debasing servility among the sailors of the merchant fleet upon

the lakes that is found among the fore-castle hands on salt waters. The men were usually of the same social rank as the mates and captain, and when the boat went into winter quarters, would probably go back to the same neighborhood, and be just as highly regarded by the community. Indeed, it was not at that day an unusual thing for young men preparing for college to serve as sailors during the summer months, and complete their academic course in the winter. With such men to choose from, Captain Moxom had little trouble in securing competent subordinates and an effective crew. He was considered a hard man to serve under; yet situations on the Queen were eagerly sought after. No sick man ever suffered for lack of attention, and no well man shirked duty there. The captain made no bluster; but he knew every man's place and every man's duty, and saw that it was performed. He never interfered with a subordinate while on duty, and never relieved him of responsibility unless absolutely necessary. He was always standing by the wheel-

house when the boat was coming into port, but beyond a wave of the hand to the mate or a bow to some acquaintance on the docks, he seemed hardly to notice what was going on. Yet every one knew that no detail of the boat's working escaped his attention. The rubbing of an unoled bearing would bring him to the engine-room without delay, and a failure to polish the brass stair-plate would lose a steward his place.

This man was the real secret of the Queen's success. He was one of her chief owners, and neglected nothing necessary to maintain her reputation. He was indifferent to fatigue, and commanded the confidence of his crew by being always awake and prepared for emergency. Any considerable change in the weather would bring him out of his cabin, yet he rarely took command in person. When he did, everybody knew that he considered the emergency pressing. There were rumors of storms in which he had placed himself at the wheel, and brought her safely through the most intricate and dangerous

passages of the Flats. "He knows her weight to a pound," the pilots were accustomed to say, "and can carry her safe where nobody else would think of trying to take her." He never lounged with his passengers or chatted with his subordinates. A man of quick resource, inflexible will, and untiring attention to his business, was Captain David Moxom of the Queen of the West, but a cold, hard man, with whom no one trifled, and to whom few ever had the courage to appeal for favor. This was the person to whom Joe's letter was addressed. The boy saw the quiet figure on the wheel-house, and knew through subtle intuition that it was by his care that almost a thousand passengers slept peacefully and securely. He judged that Daddy Waugh's intercession would prove of little avail, and feared that the same would be true of Mr. Marvin's. Nevertheless, he shouldered his bundle, and trudged sturdily aboard almost as soon as the gang-plank touched the wharf.

Chapter IV.

JOE'S FIRST EXPERIENCE ON THE BOAT.

“Y^OU want to see the captain? He ’s asleep, and would n’t see you if he was awake. Where are you going?”

“Nowhere.”

“Nowhere? The Queen’s going somewhere pretty lively, and you ’re aboard of her, ain’t you?”

“Of course, but I ain’t going anywhere—at least, not till I see the captain.”

“Indeed! ‘Not till you see the captain?’ Shan’t I run right up to his state-room and bring him down to you?”

“O, I can wait till he gets up.”

“The mischief you can! Now, see here, my boy, I ’m pretty good-natured, but I can’t stand everything. Just tell me where you ’re going, and pay your fare like a little man, without any more fooling.”

"My fare?"

"Yes, your fare."

"I have n't any money."

"Then what are you on board the Queen of the West for? People do n't travel on her without money."

"I came to see the captain."

"O, you did! He'll be highly honored, no doubt; but he do n't carry passengers for fun. Now, you just fork over the money for your passage, or I shall have to take that bundle of yours, and put you ashore at the first landing."

The clerk of the Queen of the West, passing through the boat after she had left the dock, had found Joe on the lower deck, sitting on a piece of baggage with his little bundle beside him, watching in quiet wonder the new and bustling scene about him. Behind the clerk was a colored waiter in a white jacket, whose business it seemed to be to point out the new passengers to the collector of fares. This man could not restrain his mirth at Joe's replies, and his laughter seemed to annoy the clerk,

who, as he uttered the last words, reached forward to take Joe's bundle. The boy was too quick for him, however, and, snatching it up, he sprang nimbly to one side, only to find himself confronted by the colored man, barring his escape. Seeing himself hemmed in, the boy backed up against a pile of freight, put his bundle behind him, and coolly prepared to do battle for his possessions.

"You hain't got no right to take my things," he protested, "and you shan't—you, nor your nigger, either."

"Take it away from him, Tom," said the clerk, quietly; "we 've had enough of these beggars sponging rides. It was only last trip the old man gave me a rating for letting a little scamp beat me out of a fare."

"I ain't no beggar," said Joe, stoutly, "and I do n't want to beat nobody out of anything. I 've got a letter for the captain, and just as quick as I got aboard, I asked the red-whiskered man that was chawing tobacco and swearing at the hands, where the captain was, and he told

me to sit right down here and he 'd see 't I got sight of him after a while."

"Bring the bundle along, Tom," was the clerk's answer, impatiently turning toward the companion-way; "we can't waste any more time on the little whelp. If he won't pay we shall have to take his truck and put him off at Erie."

The porter was a jolly fellow, who had no idea of declining to do what he was told. At the same time he had no wish to hurt the lad. He knew very well the clerk's only motive was to frighten him into paying his fare. Joe, however, had never seen a colored person but once or twice, and regarded them as little better than ogres.

"Do n't touch me, you black nigger," he screamed, putting himself into an attitude of defense as the porter came towards him.

"Now, bub," said the Negro, in a not unkindly tone, "you jes ez well fork out your money an' go 'long peaceable-like, kase ef yer do n't I 'se bound ter take that ar bundle of ole clo'es, shore."

"You 'll get hurt if you touch me," said the boy, drawing down his heavy brows until they veiled the angry light of the eyes below.

"La, chile, who you s'pose is afeard on ye? Ef you was a man grow'd, now, I would n't min' takin' a bout with ye, but 't would n't be no sort o' fun to hab a squabble with a bit uv a boy like yo is."

Speaking in this pacificatory tone, the man had been artfully edging nearer to the sullen lad, and, as he concluded, made a sudden dive for the bundle which lay at the boy's feet. If the movement was a surprise to the owner, he quickly recovered from it, and before his assailant could remove his prize, two hands were locked in the mass of kinky hair that adorned his head. A curious struggle ensued. Despite the disproportion in size, the advantage seemed for a time to be with Joe. Holding down the porter's head, he made it necessary for him to use his hands to support himself, and so the boy was protected from blows. The clerk, hearing the noise of the scuffle, returned to the foot

of the gangway, and stood convulsed with laughter at the ludicrous spectacle.

"Hang on to him, youngster," he cried. "Do n't let him butt you. If you manage to tame that black sheep, I'll be hanged if you do n't ride free, if I have to pay your fare myself."

The Negro, on hands and knees, pushed the boy about the deck, endeavoring to get hold of his feet. Hearing the clerk's laughter, a volley of curiously compounded oaths burst from his lips. Suddenly, he threw himself on his back, and catching the boy, who thus lost his vantage, sprang quickly to his feet. Holding him at arm's length, he gave Joe blow after blow with open palm upon the side of his head.

"Kick his shins! Kick his shins!" shouted the clerk, nearly suffocated with laughter.

The boy, maddened and desperate as he was, recalled the popular tradition and applied his heavy boots with merciless force to the point indicated. Unable to endure the pain, the porter's temper gave way, and, with a final blow

with his fist, he knocked his tormenter back upon the deck. As he did so, some one leaped from the darkness at the side of the gangway, and seizing the Negro, hurled him against the piled-up baggage as if he had been a child. At the same time, with a spluttering admixture of oaths and salivation, he exclaimed:

“What d ’ye mean? What ye doin’ with that boy? What ye here for anyhow? You—you miserable black rascal?”

“I was jes obeyin’ orders, sah,” said the obsequious porter, picking himself up.

“Orders! Whose orders?”

“Mr. Sloeum’s, sah,” with a gesture toward the clerk, now vainly struggling to restrain his mirth.

“What business has he got givin’ orders and assaulting passengers on my deck?”

“The boy would n’t pay his fare,” began the clerk.

“S’pose he did n’t,” spluttered the irate sailor. “Did n’t he tell ye I told him to set there till I got time to take him to the ‘old man?’ ”

"Yes," admitted the clerk, alarmed at the trouble he had innocently gotten into.

"And was n't he settin' there as peaceable as a kitten?"

"Yes, but—"

"Do n't you say another word, Gil Slocum, not another word, er I shan't be able to keep my hands off ye. I feel 's if I ought to whip both on ye. D'ye hear, both on ye? But I won't. Not now, anyway. When we get to Buffalo, we 'll see which the old man cares most about keepin', Gil Slocum an' a nigger, or Jesse Newlin."

"Really, Mr. Newlin," said the clerk, who was both manly and good-natured, "there was no idea of interfering with your authority."

"I s'pose not—s'pose not," answered Newlin, expectorating vigorously; "but you had n't no business pryin' round here and meddlin' with the boy, nohow. We do n't carry any cabin passengers on the lower deck—not while I'm in charge at least, Mr. Slocum."

"But you see, Mr. Newlin, the old man is

sure to know just how many come on and go off at every port, and hold me responsible for every passenger, no matter where he rides."

"I do n't carry passengers here without making it right with the old man, Mr. Slocum. You know that, and you were n't never held responsible for any one that rode here when it was my watch below."

"Perhaps, Mr. Newlin—" began the clerk.

"There ain't no perhaps about it. If it's got so that I can't give an honest boy a lift, during my trick atween decks, I'll just go on some other boat where they ain't so almighty particular. That's all. There, there, sonny," he said, patting Joe on the head as he stood with clenched hands and tightly shut teeth, drawing long sobs, and trying to repress the tears of anger rather than pain that ran down his cheeks.

"But, Mr. Newlin, you know the old man holds me responsible—" began the clerk again.

"No, I do n't know nothin' of the kind 'bout the old man," spluttered Newlin. "I've sailed

with him this here will make the tenth year, and I guess I know him. He ain't very slick about the month; but he never will object to a man that tends to his business, doin' a feller-critter a decent turn now and then. I ain't very soft-hearted myself, but when I see a boy with his little pack a waitin' fer a lift, I always think of the time I waited fer 'most a week to git a chance to cross a gang-plank. Ye see, I war n't as good lookin' a boy as you be, sonny, even if Tom's fist has kind o' spread out your nose a little. A douse of cold water 'll make that all right, though."

Tom, despite his apprehension, snickered at this allusion to the squabble, and Joe, looking up into his benefactor's face to thank him, could not refrain from smiling.

"So you do n't wonder I had to wait," said Newlin, jocosely. "Wal, they do say I've been growin' handsomer ever sense, an' I do n't think I'm any great beauty yit."

He spat vigorously, and laughed at his own jest, which was received by the others with

heartly shouts. This burst of good-nature did much to mollify the irate sailor, whose homeliness was of phenomenal character. A tall, lean form, with stooping shoulders, was united to a singularly red, almost purple visage, covered with stubby spots of caroty beard, and surmounted by a short shock of red hair, which defied control, while his light-blue eyes looked out from under immense brows of yellowish white. Even Joe forgot his trouble, and laughed until he almost cried again at the thought of his protector in the rôle of an Adonis.

"Wal, Mr. Slocum," said Newlin, when the mirth had somewhat subsided, "I guess there ain't no harm done. Tom 'll have to give the boy a square meal now, to make up fer his rough usage, though."

"O, I'll do that all right, sah," said Tom, showing his teeth with delight.

"You see, Mr. Slocum," continued Newlin, "I knew this here was an honest boy the mimit I set eyes on him, an' when he stepped up to

me like a gentleman, an' sed he wanted to see the cap'n, I 'lowed he wanted to get a lift down the lake, an' so knew the old man was the very one the boy did n't want to see. He ain't mean, an' kind o' likes to have me do a good turn unbeknownst to him until arter it's over, you know. The cap'n ain't a hard man; but he's cap'n of the Queen, Mr. Slocum, an' it would n't do for him to git the reputation of bein' tender about the gills. He 'd be imposed on half the time, for he ain't stuck up, and remembers the time he wanted a lift as bad as this here boy does."

"I do n't want no lift, sir," said Joe, indignantly.

"Ye don't? What the mischief do ye want, then?"

"I want to see the captain—Captain David Moxom. I've got a letter for him."

"The dickens you have! Why did n't you say so?"

"Nobody gave me a chance to say so."

"You 're about right there," sputtered the

mate; "but do n't you go to gittin' Mr. Slocum into trouble with any complaint, boy. He did n't mean no harm; nor Tom, nuther, though the nigger was a trifle rough."

"I ain't no tale-bearer," said Joe, proudly.

"Spoke like a man, by jiminy," exclaimed the mate, slapping him on the shoulder, and spitting furiously through his black, stumpy teeth. "What 's yer name, son? Joe? A good name, a good Scriptor name, that ye need n't be ashamed of. Ye 'll make a good man, Joe, ef ye have good luck. Hev ye ever hed the measles?"

"Yes, sir."

"An' the whoopin' cough?"

"Yes, sir."

"An' the scarlet fever?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then ef ye do n't get the big head ye 're all right."

Newlin laughed, and Mr. Slocum kindly offered to take the letter to the captain as soon as he waked. This offer Joe declined, saying

that he was directed to give it into Captain Moxom's hands, himself. Newlin commended him for obeying orders, but assured him that he would n't, on no account, disturb the captain at that hour, unless it was a matter of special concern to the old man.

Joe admitted that his errand was not likely to be very important to the captain, but might be so to himself.

"Jest so," said Newlin, with a confidential wink. "Then I'll tell ye what I'd do, son, if I was you. I'd jest stay around quiet-like till after breakfast. The old man is bound to be a little better-natured than common then, which ain't sayin' a great deal, I admit. I'll go with ye, an' if he do n't do nothin' more, he can't git out of givin' ye a free ride to Buffalo, anyhow. If you once git there, I guess you can find a job, or if you want to go on East, the canal's open, an' you ain't the boy I take ye for, if ye can't follow a towpath an' pick up a livin' ez ye go along. Now go an' git yer breakfast. 'T ain't exactly the fashion-

able hour for passengers, but you won't mind eatin' with the hands, I take it. Tom'll see after you. I'll look fer ye to be on hand the minit we pass the breakwater at Erie goin' out."

So Joe was left in the care of Tom, who was anxious to make amends for his rudeness through a consciousness that he had narrowly escaped discharge from a pleasant and profitable position. The boy could not have had a better cicerone in making his first tour about the boat, which was the pride of our inland marine, than the steward's assistant, nor could he have had two better friends aboard her, saving only the captain, than Jesse Newlin, the mate, and Gil Slocum, the clerk.

Chapter V.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CAPTAIN.

JOE had finished a substantial breakfast before the sun rose. After a time the gong sounded, and the sleepy passengers began to pour forth from the cabin and state-rooms, and start from the chairs and sofas. It seemed as if every nook and cranny of the great vessel had been the resting-place of a passenger. Old and young, male and female, they swarmed forth in all sorts of attire, and in the most uncertain moods and tempers. The bar upon the lower deck opened, and was soon crowded with patrons, anxious to prepare their stomachs for the breakfast which would soon be served. In that day many more people drank ardent spirits, and did it more openly, than they do now. Tom was obliged to return to his duties, and Joe wandered at will about the boat. After a time he went out and leaned over the guards

near the bow, watching the water as it sprang up in a sparkling curve about the prow. The morning sunshine lighted the rippling waves; there was a brisk southerly breeze, and the slaty cliffs of the shore-line were crowned now with blossoming orchards or newly-plowed fields, and now with gloomy hemlock forests. The steady throb of the engine was in the boy's ears, and the splash of the great wheels as they smote with ceaseless stroke, had not yet ceased to fill his mind with wonder. The scene fired his imagination, and, coupled with the task he had undertaken to perform, roused him to heroic ardor. He raised his hand, and uttered some brave words, which the wind swept lightly away. No one heard them, but a quiet man standing near, noted the tone and saw the flush that mounted to the cheek. He smiled and said:

"You seem to be enjoying yourself, my lad."

"O," answered the boy, still looking off over the water, "it is grand!" His voice thrilled with emotion, his lip quivered, and the observer

wondered if there were not tears in the eyes that were fastened on the blue expanse.

"What is it that seems so grand to you?"

"O, everything," with a comprehensive gesture toward the horizon—"the sky, the lake, the sunrise, and this beautiful boat!"

"Would you like to be a sailor on such a craft as this?"

"I would rather be that than—than be a king, sir," said the boy, turning to his questioner, and raising his eyes to his face.

"I mean, captain, sir," he exclaimed, apologetically, as he took off his cap, and let the sunshine play upon the short, brown curls. Captain Moxom—for it was he—noted the lad's embarrassment, and with some trivial remark turned and left him.

Though he knew himself to be a favorite with his superior officer, when the time came for its accomplishment, Jesse Newlin was troubled as to the result of the experiment he had determined to make. Going with Joe towards the captain's office, as the double-cabin

he occupied was called, the mate screwed his courage to the sticking-point by cautioning the boy.

“Do n’t you be afraid of the old man,” he said, “not a bit; he ’s—he ’s a bit rough sometimes, and apt to speak sharp. There ain’t no need on ’t, an’ it do n’t mean anything—but it’s his way—you know—his way; and the cap’n’s way is law and gospel, too, when you ’re afloat. But do n’t be afraid—stan’ right up to him. He can’t eat you,—an’ he ’s just had his breakfast, if he could. Tell him what ye want without foolin’, an’ when he says he’s got enough, you just ’bout ship and come back here to the gangway. I’ll be there. Now here we are. What’d ye say your name was? Joe? Joe what? Wal, now you stay outside, Joe, and when I open the door and say, ‘Come in, Joe,’ you just take off your cap and hold it up against yer breast, in yer left hand—so. Take yer letter in yer right hand, and step in smart and active-like; make yer best bow, an’ say, ‘Capt’in Moxom, here ’s a letter for ye.’ You

know who it 's from, I s'pose? Wal, you might tell him that, if it 's anybody he knows. Now—"

The mate looked his charge over, nodded his head in approbation, rapped on the white door, entered when gruffly bidden, and closed it behind him. Joe remained outside, reading over and over again the gilt letters across the white surface: "Captain."

"There was a boy got on durin' the night, Cap'n, that 's got an errand with ye."

"What is it?" asked the captain, quietly.

"That 's what nobody knows but him, and he won't tell. He 's got a letter for ye."

"Did you bring it?"

"He won't let me have it."

"He won't?"

"That 's jest it."

"Let him keep it, then," said the captain, turning to his desk.

"'T would n't do no good, captain. He 's one o' them boys that obey orders. There ain't many of them, perhaps, but he 's one. It 's my

opinion he 'd jest set out there till the deck rotted under him, but he 'd give you that letter, himself."

"Indeed,—then I may as well see him first as last, especially as he has you for his backer."

"I'm much obleeged to you, captain. I kind o' took a notion to the boy, and—"

"I know all about it," said the captain, signing his name to a paper he had been reading over while they spoke.

"Has Slocum been tellin'—"

"Slocum did his duty in a silly way; you exceeded yours in a manly way. That is all. Bring in your boy."

Newlin was so surprised at this new proof of the ubiquity of the captain of the Queen, that he forgot his preliminary instructions, and opening the cabin door, he called out:

"Here, you youngster, come in."

Joe, however, remembered his admonitions, and was about to follow them when the captain took the letter from his hand, and said:

"Why, hello, if it is n't my little friend who



Joe's Interview with Captain Moxom.

See page 72.

wanted to be a captain! Well, what is your business?"

He glanced through Mr. Marvin's note, which brought a smile, then read Killis Waugh's letter carefully, and asked a good many questions of the lad, who told him the story of Daddy Waugh's misfortunes, and his own determination. Newlin stood by and heard it all, now and then uttering an exclamation of approval, and testifying his interest by accelerated mastication of tobacco. As it happened, he lived in an adjoining town, and was able to confirm the greater part of Joe's story.

After the captain had learned all he could of Daddy Waugh's affairs, and asked after old neighbors, he said to Joe, kindly enough, but in the masterful tone which comes of long command:

"So you want to get a berth on this boat, do you?"

"If you've got a place where I can earn something, sir."

"How much do you think you ought to receive?"

"Just what you think I'm worth, sir."

"Well, I want a boy to run of errands for me, who will obey my orders, and not be subject to any one's else direction. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"In the cities where we stop there will be a good deal to do and little chance to play; but if you are faithful, attentive, and polite, I will give you five dollars a month and found. If you are prompt and obliging, you may sometimes get a dime from others whom you will have a chance to serve. Will that suit you?"

"O yes, indeed," said Joe, half-delirious with delight. "I am a thousand times obliged, and I'm sure Daddy Waugh—"

"That will do. Show your thanks rather than speak them. Now go and send Tom, the steward's boy to me."

"Wal, I declare," said Mr. Newlin, when they were fairly outside the cabin door, "you do beat all I ever see for luck. Why, I never knew the old man to thaw out so in my life."

· I've seen governors and congressmen and all sorts of big-bugs on the Queen, but I never see him pay as much attention to any one of them! And what a berth! Just to run o' errands for him, an' not to be under any one else on the boat. Was n't that what he said? Why, you are a notch above the second officer. Darned if I'll stand it. It's contrary to discipline, an' if you do n't obey my orders, I'll just pitch you overboard. That's what I will."

The next day Joe was provided with a blue sailor suit, and was known thereafter on the Queen as "The Captain's Boy."

Chapter VI.

JOE'S ENGAGEMENT.

A SHORT time served to familiarize Joe with his new life, and with that inexpressible charm which attaches more or less to every form of maritime existence. He had no knowledge of the sea, and so was not troubled by comparisons between its grandeur and the blue, sweet water through which the Queen swept, always at racing sped, always nearer on time than any public conveyance had ever thought of being hitherto. Four great inland seas, Lakes Erie, St. Clair, Huron, and Michigan, with their twelve hundred miles of varied and intricate channels, constituted a voyage of more variety and less opportunity for tedium than any other of like extent upon the globe. It offers in quick alternation the charms of river and ocean. Sometimes the shores are hidden, and the blue skies kiss the blue waters on either

hand; then they are seen for hours, dim shadows in the distance, over which the clouds gather; then they rise in fertile terraces with orchard-embowered homes and sharp glittering steeples; again they close about in a hundred softly-rounded forms, green to the water's edge, with deep, clear channels between, and the soft outlines of pebbly islands; anon they close in, and the way is barred by shoal and bank and islet, until the steersman's hand grows weary of the ever-shifting wheel, and his eye dizzy in the search for the ever-varying landmarks. Now the bright waters of Erie; now the tangled maze of the Flats of the St. Clair, the river with a hundred islands; the dark, sullen waters of Huron; the rugged Mackinaw; and the restless, green expanse of Michigan, swept by the steady prairie winds. It is hardly to be wondered at that, within a month, Joe Thompson's luxurious floating home became only less dear to him than the Hip-roof House by the sandy roadside, the thought of whose inmates was ever in his heart.

Joe had been away from home a couple of months, when he received a letter from Daddy Waugh which deeply touched his heart. He could see in every line how the old man pined for his return. Daddy Waugh sent his compliments to Captain Moxom, and thanked him in formal phrase, but with pathetic earnestness, for his kindness to the boy. He informed the lad that lawyer Marvin had taken up the mortgage, paying Perkins off entirely, and had given him a "paper writing that he should keep the place just as long as he paid the interest regularly." This was glad news to Joe. After a good deal of effort, he mustered up courage to tell Captain Moxom the purport of the letter. The captain listened carelessly, and merely said that it was "a good thing for old man Waugh."

Joe's duties were not light, but so varied that they did not seem severe. It was before the days of telephones, electric bells, and speaking-tubes. Annunciators, express companies, and traveling postal-clerks were yet unknown agencies of civilization. Afloat, the boy had

little time when he was not either employed or likely to be called at any moment. But it was when they touched at a port that his active duties began. He was really the chief connective between the great steamer and the shore. Whenever she touched a wharf, he was the first to cross the gang-plank. Everybody gave way while the "Captain's Boy," in his natty uniform, with his express-bag slung across his shoulders, sprang lightly to the dock, and sped away into the town with the messages intrusted to his hands. First, of course, came the errands which the captain had charged him to perform; then the requirements of the passengers were attended to. Letters were mailed, packages delivered. Little by little, the people in the different towns along the course of the steamer, came to avail themselves of this new and convenient method of communication, and the captain's boy of the Queen of the West was a recognized messenger for the transmission of small parcels. Before the summer was over, a regular system of parcel delivery had been in-

augurated, and Joe, under the captain's direction, had come to have charge of quite an important business, the proceeds of which were regularly turned over to the captain, who had established a system of charges, intending at first only to make the new idea pay the hire of the extra boy, whom he had taken on without an absolute necessity, and felt compelled to demonstrate to the owners it was not altogether a useless luxury.

It was not to be wondered at, that after five months of this busy, happy life, the pet of the crew, a prime favorite of the passengers, and the trusted agent of the captain, it was with a feeling of actual pleasure that he heard the proposition from Mr. Newlin that he should remain upon the *Queen of the West* all winter.

"You see," he said to Joe, moving his lips as he spoke, in the uncertain manner which characterized him, "you see, she 's a-goin' to tie up in Buffalo for the winter. The old man an' the rest of 'em that owns her, they 've took it into their heads that she 's got to be over-

hauled from bowsprit to starn-post. They 're goin' to have 'most all her inside works took out an' lots o' new chicken-fixin's put in. I can't tell you all they 're goin' to do with her, 'cause I'm puzzled if I know. It's a lot of new fangled notions the captain's been takin' up, an' the rest of 'em have given in to 'em jest 'cause they're his'n, I s'pose. I'm sure I do n't know any other reason. I would n't ha' done it, and told him so. 'Let the old Queen alone,' says I. 'She 's good 'nough jest as she is. There ain't nothin' else in these ere fresh-water ponds that lays over her anyway,' says I. 'She 'll carry more passengers, carry 'em quicker, and carry 'em jest as safe as anything that floats. Now what do you want of anything more?' But he's took a notion, Joe, an' you know that when the captain takes a notion, it 's ez good 's another man's oath. There ain't any more movin' on him than if he was Mount Pizgah.

"I do n't see how he can bear to do it, though. If I was him, seems as if I'd 'most ez soon see

my mother made over. Here he's made his fortin' and his reputation in her till one can hardly tell which is t'other, Dave Moxom or the Queen, an' now to go rippin' her up an' riggin' her over, I swear it's right down mean an' ungrateful. For my part, I'd 'most as lief see the poor old thing going down at the end of her last voyage, as to have her transmogrified till I won't know whether I'm at home or visitin' when I'm aboard of her. That's the way I feel.

“The cap'n had a sort o' notion how it 'ud be, I guess, and that I would n't step foot on her gang-plank, ef I should chance to come back in the spring and find her all trigged out so 't I would n't know her by sight, no matter how fine she might be. He's been at me to stay aboard her all winter to see that there do n't nothin' happen. These workmen are mighty careless, ye know—terrible careless ef there ain't nobody watchin' 'em. Ten chances to one they'll hev her afire a half-dozen times before the ice breaks up. The cap'n wants

somebody aboard her he can rely on, an' sleep easy while he 's home for the winter. I 'm sure I do n't blame him. So he 's offered me good wages; in fact, just as much as I git in summer, an' boarded right along, too, to stay on her an' hev oversight an' command like. Tom 's goin' to stay an' cook, an' they allow me my pick o' the hands to spell me on the watch, an' kind o' for company, you know.

"I spoke to the cap'n 'bout you. He said he 'd jest as lief you staid as anybody; in fact, a little ruther. He does seem to set more store by you than anybody else that was ever on the Queen afore. I thought at first some o' the hands would be kind o' riled about it, but seems as if they was too well pleased to have Dave Moxom set store by anybody to care whether 't was 'em or not. But he does seem to take real intrust in you, real intrust. He said he did n't 'bleve you could stay, thought you 'd be wanted 't home during the winter, you know, and besides that he said you ought to be goin' to school, half a year anyhow. He 's right

there, too. In fact, Dave Moxom's 'most always right, ef he is kind o' cur'us in his ways. That idee 'bout school sort o' upset me. You see I'd got my mind settled on havin' you with me. I thought we could fix up kind o' snug and nice aboard the Queen, you an' me an' Tom, an' hev 'bout ez good a time ez three fellers need to hev; all at the company's expense. That's the fun ov it, Joe. O' course I'd like to go home's well as anybody. I dunno what the ol' woman will think, having me away from home summer 'n winter, too. And the young uns—by thunder, Joe, I expect the little cusses will get to think their dad's no more 'count 'n shadder. But then the wages! They'll go a good way towards consolin' the ol' woman. But I wa'n't a goin' to stay 'nless you was with me, that's certain. I didn't want to keep ye out o' school, though, nor take ye away from home, ef ye was really needed there for chores an' sich like, ye know.

“You see the cap'n says he'll give you a man's wages, 'cause you'll be worth jist as

much 's a man to watch 'bout the boat, an' there 's got to be a watch kept every minit of the time I have charge of her. There ain't no sech property as the Queen goin' to be left under my charge 'thout somebody 's eyes bein' on her from the time her nose is tied up to the snubbin' post, till she 's run out of the creek in the spring. That 's Jess Newlin's way o' takin' care of things. Of course, you 'll hev to watch your one-third of the time, only when I spell ye now an' then; so you 'll airn your money jest the same 's the rest o' us. Now that 's ten dollars a month and board, Joe. Yer grand'ther 'ud like to hev ye 't home, but he 'd hev you to board, an' there 's nothin' to do only the chores. Now, it jest 'curred to me there 's allus somebody that 'd be willin' to do the chores for his board an' go to school, an' 't would n't cost a cent more to board him than 't would you, do n't ye see? I do n't know nothin' 'bout how yer fixed 't home, but I jest conceited that the whole thing could be 'ranged, an' you not lose yer schoolin' nor yer grand'ther yer board.

You see, Tom an' I, we could take our watches any time, only Tom 'ud hev to be off at meal-time, o' course, 'cause he 'd hev to doctor the grub. But we could fix our watches so's to put yours in piecemeal in the mornin' an' afternoon, don't ye see? And let ye go to school in the middle of the day. I spoke to the cap'n 'bout it, an' he says they've fust-rate schools there that ye could go to, an' do jest as well's you 'd do 't home. Now, what 'd ye think of it, boy?

"T ain't half a bad chance. I hev kind o' tuk a notion to you somehow, an' I 'd like to hev ye 'long, but there ain't no hurry. Jest take yer time an' make up yer mind in yer own way. If I stay, the cap'n will give me a week off afore the season's over to go home an' see the folks, an' kind o' fix up fer the winter, ye know. I 'spect he 'd do the same by you, too, ef ye conclude to stay."

The good mate with his curious countenance and rough tongue hitched hurriedly away, spinning himself to the right and left, as he went

forward to attend to his duties after this conversation, leaving Joe, as he said, to make up his mind. Joe's mind was already made up. It was too good an opportunity to be lost; he saw that at a glance. And though his lip trembled and his eyes filled with tears as he thought of the disappointment which Daddy Waugh and 'Cindy would experience, and though his heart grew heavy at the idea of facing the unwonted terrors of a city school, and he felt that the winter nights would be very long even on board the Queen, if she were locked in the ice with other dismantled craft in a desolate harbor, he made his decision. The result of it was that late in October the mate and Joe went ashore at the very dock where they had first met, and when the Queen had started on her western way, mounted a wagon that, by pre-arrangement, waited to take Newlin to his home. They were to meet the boat again on her downward trip the next week, and remain on board until her first upward trip the succeeding summer.

"Mind now, and be ready when I call for

ye on Monday week," was the parting injunction of Newlin, as he dropped Joe at Daddy Waugh's on his way home. "That 'll give ye jest a week an' one Sunday to straighten out the Hip-roof. Do n't look as ef it needed much fixin', but I guess you 'll find enough to do. Ef ye do n't, ye can take it out in visitin' with that pretty cousin. What's her name? 'Cindy, ain't it? Not yer cousin, eh? So much the better; 'nother feller's cousin is enough sight better—'nuff sight—'nuff sight. Good bye." He left Joe standing by the roadside, trying to quiet the strangling heart-beats which every lad experiences when he returns home from his first prolonged absence, and wonders what changes time has made since he departed.

Chapter VII.

A VISIT TO HOME.

NOTHING was changed about the old place so far as a stranger could have detected; but Joe saw what a stranger's eye would have missed. It is true summer had come and gone, and the autumn winds had ripened the leaves; but it was not this that Joe noted. Hope had evidently come into the Hip-roof House since he went away. Things looked tidier and snuggier than he had ever seen them. It cut him to the heart for a moment, as he thought that they got along, not only just as well, but even a little better, than when he was present.

"I guess some of it, though," he said to himself, consolingly, as he shouldered his bag and stepped toward the gate, "is due to my being away trying to help."

His spirits rose at the thought. He could

not help feeling his pocket to see if the little store of earnings was safe.

"That will make Daddy Waugh glad, and 'Cindy, too," he thought, opening the gate. It was a new gate, fastened with a spring-latch of a pattern Killis Waugh was very proud of having invented. It was made of nicely-turned bars, neatly fitted together, and showed the loving care of the industrious and skillful invalid. The fresh, unpainted woodwork attested that it had but recently been put in place. The boy tried the latch and swung the gate back and forth, noticing its even, steady movement.

"Daddy Waugh must have been out here when that was hung," he commented. "There ain't anybody else around here looks after little things the way he does. It has n't been done long, either—not more 'n a week or two at the outside. I would n't wonder now if it was put up on purpose, so 't I 'd see it the first thing" when I came home."

This reflection sent the blood rushing to his heart like a friendly greeting. The gate was a

token of remembrance—of that he felt sure. As he closed it behind him, he saw the bright autumn sun lighting up with its setting rays the familiar woods, and noted that the corn had been cut in the “three-acre lot” across the road, showing a goodly crop of pumpkins.

A couple of spotted pigs, hearing the click of the gate-latch, came running to the trough near by, and lustily squealed their disappointment at finding it empty.

“Well, I declare,” said the boy, half-aloud, “how them shoats have grown! It do n’t seem possible they can be the pigs I brought home in March. And there’s corn and pumpkins enough over there to fatten ’em and keep the cow in good condition all winter. I declare Daddy Waugh has been taking a fresh start in his old days! We’ll pay off the mortgage in short order, if things go on in this way. And just look at the apples!” He turned and started toward the house, his eyes sparkling as they wandered over the heavily-fruited trees which seemed to embrace the Hip-roof House on all

sides. The lad was at home once more. The Queen, and all that he had seen and hoped and felt beyond the charmed circle of his boyhood home, were forgotten. He experienced for the first time the thrill of tender thought which assures us that all other life is but an adjunct of that better life which centers at home. He had passed the boundary-line and entered upon man's estate. He had become not merely the care-taker, but the planner and achiever of life-designs—one who causes events to come to pass through conceiving brain and tireless hand.

He walked up the path quite forgetful of the heavy bag upon his shoulders, which had hardly been out of his mind during the whole homeward trip, his left hand picking unconsciously the rankly-blooming marigolds which lined it, and threw up their black and yellow faces as if to attract his attention to their silent welcome.

Reaching the house, Joe walked lightly along the porch, and opened the door without knocking. Daddy Waugh sat before a smoldering

fire, working upon some small article and humming the words of a favorite hymn. The tears came to the boy's eyes as he noted the air of contentment, and thought how much pleasanter was the home-coming than the leave-taking had been. Putting down his bag, he stepped quickly in front of the old man, doffed his cap, and saluted smartly, as was his wont on board the Queen.

"For the land sakes!" exclaimed the old man with a start, dropping the broken dish he was patiently mending, so that it fell to the floor, and was shattered beyond hope of repair. "Only see how you startled me, youngster—jest as I'd got it fairly together ready to glue up. What d'ye mean breaking in on a body that way, anyhow? Have n't ye any manners, coming into folks' houses without rappin'? I s'pose it's 'Cindy ye want ter see. She's milkin'; but next time ye want to come in, do n't be afraid o' rappin' on the door. It's old, but it'll stand a deal of knockin' yit. I rarely did n't think," he growled, as he busied

himself in picking up the pieces of the shattered bowl, "that any of the neighbors had such an unmannerly cub. Who be ye, anyhow?" The old man looked over his glasses at the smiling boy.

"Joe Thompson, sir," with another salute.

"Joe what?" asked the old man, with a puzzled look—"Joe Thompson—Joe—ye do n't mean?" peering eagerly into his face—"Blessed ef it ain't—*our* Joe!"

The old man caught him by the arms, and drew him close.

"Our Joe and nobody else!" he exclaimed, as he patted the boy's shoulder, while the tears poured down his gentle face. "And to think I did n't know him," reproachfully; "a boy as good as he is, that has only been away such a little time! But how you have grown, lad! And in them clothes, too! I began to think my eyes was failin', but I do n't believe 'Cindy herself would ha' known ye, jest on a sudden so."

"I 'm sorry about the bowl, Daddy Waugh," said Joe, archly.

"O, bother the bowl! I 'd be willing to see all the dishes in the house broke for a sight o' you, lad. How d 'ye do? I need n't ask that, though. Any one can see you were never so well before. How d 'ye git here, an' what d 'ye mean playin' tricks on yer old daddy that way?"

The old man had his arms about the boy's waist. Joe was absently stroking the thin, gray hair that curled away from the bald head-crown and rested like a silver circlet on his neck, when a quick step was heard upon the planks at the back door.

"'Cindy!" said Joe, in a half-whisper. With a warning look and his hand on his lips, he sprang behind the door. The old man turned to watch the expected surprise as 'Cindy entered. She had grown even more than her boy-playmate, during the summer. Two braids of rich, auburn hair hung below her waist, and her fair face was flushed with ruddy health.

She carried a tin pail nearly full of milk, and as she threw back the door, effectually concealing Joe, she said in loud, but cheerful, tones:

“Grandpa, I do n’t believe we ’d better wait for Joe to come ’fore we begin to gather the apples. I wish the land he was here—”

Two hands were clapped over her eyes before she could utter another word.

“Ha, ha!” laughed the old man. “That ’s what ye git for talkin’ ’bout them ye think do n’t hear ye.”

The young girl did not manifest any surprise, beyond the fact that her face became suffused with crimson and her lips were wreathed in smiles.

“It ’s Joe,” she said.

Joe kissed her before he restored her vision, and when he had removed his hands and put an arm around her waist, her eyes were full of tears. Something the boy saw in their depths led him to kiss the full, red lips once more—this time even more tenderly.

“There, there,” said the old man, jocosely;

"do n't be goin' on with any more of your sailor ways. Is that the way you treat the girls?"

"That's the way I treat 'Cindy, Daddy Waugh," said Joe. "'Cause she's my little wife, you know—always has been, and always going to be."

"Have n't you forgot that?" asked 'Cindy, as she started toward the pantry with her milk. There was a deeper flush upon her face, however, and her voice did not betray dissatisfaction.

"No," retorted the boy, saucily, "I have n't forgot it, and do n't ever mean to forget it."

"Sho, sho," said the old man, in a tone of mock disapproval; "won't ye never git over yer boy pranks?"

"Spect not, daddy. Feel as if I'd have to dance a hornpipe now to keep myself from flying away."

Setting his cap jauntily upon one side, the frolicsome boy wheeled a chair out of the way, sprang into the middle of the floor, and began to execute the breathless movements that seem

to be the climax of the sailor's idea of saltatory achievement.

"Land sakes! Only see the boy! 'Cindy! 'Cindy! Do look at him." The old man lifted his thin hands in half-protesting amazement. The injunction was unnecessary. 'Cindy was already standing in the doorway, watching with admiration this new accomplishment of her playmate. "Bless my soul!" continued the old man, "ain't ye never goin' to stop? Why, you 'll shake your legs off, boy, besides upsettin' everything in the house, and bringin' the Hip-roof down about our ears, the first thing ye know. Stop! you young varmint! Here, where 's my hammer?" fumbling among his tools on the little bench before him. "I declare I 'll throw this mallet at ye if ye do n't quit."

He raised the weapon with a merry twinkle in his eyes, which showed how he enjoyed the presence of the healthy lad and his innocent pranks. Joe bowed low, kissed his hand as he swept the floor with his cap, pironetted lightly

back to 'Cindy, and surprised that young lady with another kiss.

"I declare, 'Cindy," exclaimed the old man, "we'll have to have the constable in to keep that young cub straight. The lake's sp'ilt him, 'Cindy, clean sp'ilt him. Only think of such carryin's on in the Hip-roof House! Kissin' an' dancin'! Not that I mind kissin'—in moderation, of course—but the dancin'! That's an abomination! An such dancin'! Why, it's enough to take one's breath away. An' I a deacon, too—that is, I was before I was buried. I do n't know as I'm anything now!"

"O, you must n't scold Joe the first thing after he's been away so long," said 'Cindy, "or perhaps he won't come again!"

"Scold him? Bless your dear soul, who ever thought of scoldin'? Can't an old man have the privilege of carryin' on a little, even if he can't dance? Come here, both on ye! Let me take your hands, an' look at ye together. I say for it, you are a pair to be proud of! An' you love your old daddy, do n't ye, just the same as ever?"

An' ye 're still children, too—jest as lovin' and kind as when ye went away. O, the Lord is good! I asked him to bring back my boy, an' he brought me a man with a boy's heart! 'T ain't many has such a boy an' such a girl to comfort their old age—not many! We can afford to have a mortgage on the old house while we 've got such treasures in it!"

"But we won't have that mortgage long, daddy," said Joe, eagerly.

"I b'lieve ye, son, I b'lieve ye; but go away now—go away, you an' 'Cindy. I want to be alone an' think, an' I would n't have ye see me cryin' for anything in the world—I would n't, truly," he added, with ludicrous protestations, while the tears ran down his furrowed cheeks.

The children knew his moods, and, kissing him tenderly, withdrew, and left him to render thanks to that One greatest, whose lessons of charity he had so well learned.

Chapter VIII.

IOE'S PROJECT.

THE impatient lad declared that he "must go and look around" at once, and 'Cindy must go with him. The girl objected, saying she must prepare the evening meal; but he asserted imperiously that it could wait, but he must see the orchard before the daylight ended. 'Cindy assented half-reluctantly, and yet with a secret contentment that showed in looks and tone as they left the house and took the path toward the spring. The sunset glow lighted the heavy-laden trees, and the scent of the fallen fruit filled the air. The boy talked eagerly. The girl listened half-doubtfully. He was positive, masterful. The instinct of ownership, possession, achievement, had awakened in his soul. This was the Hip-roof place which he would redeem from a creditor's hand. He was paying back the debt of his infancy, and

saving from want the man who had taken pity on his helplessness. He was thinking not so much of himself as his aspirations and achievements. 'Cindy walked beside him alert and eager, but thoughtful and subdued. She was thinking of him, and wondering why the boy who returned was not exactly the one who had gone away five months before. She was sure he was different, and was not certain that she would like him quite as well—or rather, if he would like her so well as had the playmate she had lost.

“Tell you what, 'Cindy,” said Joe, with a somewhat pronounced assertiveness of manner, “there do n't anybody get the Hip-roof place while we're on deck, do they?”

“I guess not, Joe,”—doubtfully.

“Guess not? I do n't guess; I know. It's everything in taking hold, you see.”

“Yes?”

“Of course it is. Only think, 't ain't hardly half a year since Daddy Waugh was going to give up, and let that mean 'Siah Perkins take

the place at his own price, and go to the county house, himself. But that was n't our notion, was it, 'Cindy?"

"You know grandpa is old and feeble," said the girl, apologetically.

"Exactly"—not noticing the implied reproach, because he had not intended any reflection—"and that 's the reason we have to take hold and think for him, as well as do for him."

"O, we could n't get along without grandpa to plan and advise."

"No, no," rejoined the boy. "But he do n't do to depend on any more. We 've got to look after things, and save the old place ourselves."

"Of course we must do what we can. Do n't seem to me as if I could do much," murmured the girl.

"No, 't ain't as if you were a boy," answered Joe, condescendingly, utterly ignoring the prayer for appreciation that lurked in her tones; "'t ain't as if you were a boy; but I tell you, 'Cindy, there ain't many girls that would take

hold all alone and keep things together and a running, and have 'em look as well as they do now, after five months."

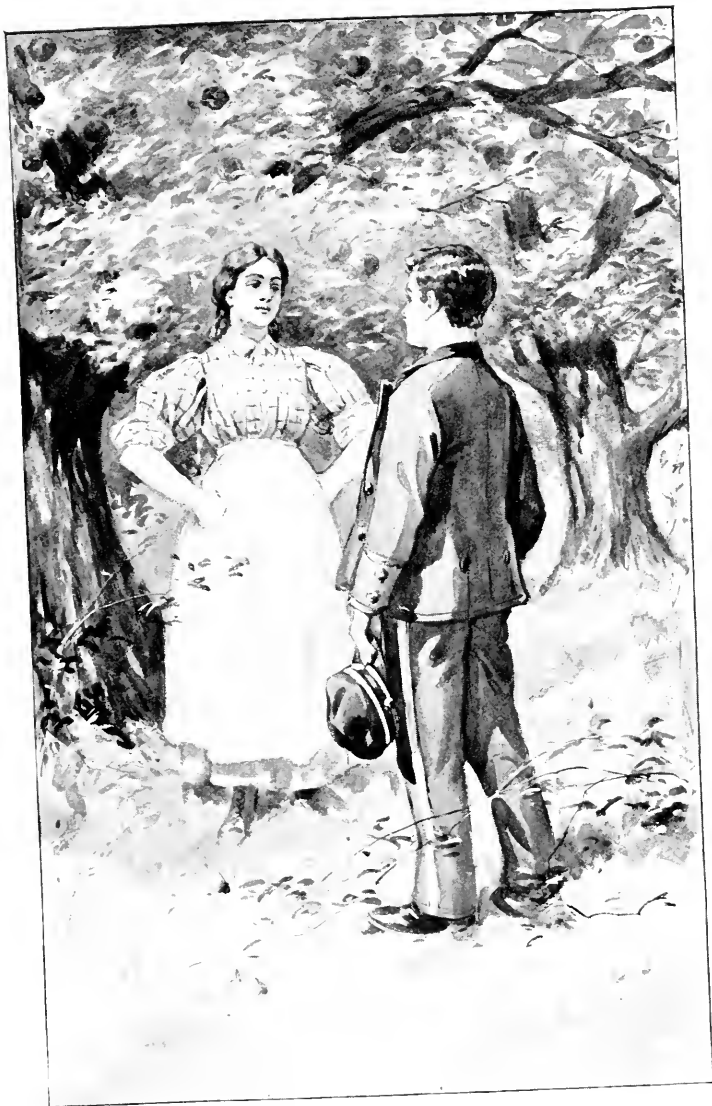
Qualified as the praise was, it was frank and hearty, and the light came into the girl's eyes and the color into her cheeks as she looked up at Joe, and said timidly:

"I did the best I could, Joe."

The sunset glow was on her face, and a heavily-laden bough of blood-red Spitzenbergs hung just behind, as Joe turned to her. She was a fair and waiting Madonna, framed in russet-green, bedecked with Pompeian red, and lighted with a golden aureole. Though he did not know it, the boy forgot himself in the glory of her loveliness. He forgot his achievements, his aspiration, seeing, remembering only her.

"I declare, 'Cindy, you are pretty—never saw a girl grow handsome as fast in my life," he said, with characteristic positiveness.

Woman is made to be wooed, and nothing restores the equanimity of even the most unpracticed feminine, so quickly as admiration.



Joe and 'Cindy in the Orchard.

See page 104.

So, instead of growing confused, a look of quiet satisfaction stole into 'Cindy's eyes, and she said demurely:

"You were saying something about—about the old place?"

"Was I?" returned Joe, absently. "O yes, I was saying that I was n't inclined to give it up just because 'Siah Perkins had a mortgage on it. Neither were you, for that matter," he added, catching a flash in her eye. "You stood by me like—like a—"

"Like a sister, Joe," she suggested.

"Well, that ain't what I was going to say, but I s'pose it 's what I ought to say. I do n't know nothing 'bout sisters, 'cept you, and you ain't my sister, and I 'm glad of it, too."

"Why, Joe, I did n't think you 'd ever say that to me. I 'm sure I 've tried to be a good sister." There was reproach in her voice, and Joe thought she was going to cry.

"O, I did n't mean you were n't good—you know I did n't," he hastened to say.

"What did you mean, then?" The tone was

incredulous, and implied that the shower was only delayed.

"I meant—you know what I meant, 'Cindy."

"I am sure I can't imagine—what—else—you—could—mean!"

There were actually tears in the brown eyes now.

"Why, I—I just meant—" said Joe, pulling the seed from a dry stalk of timothy that stood beside him, in awkward embarrassment, "that I was glad you were n't my sister—'cause—'cause I want you some day for my wife."

"Why, Joe!" In well-simulated surprise 'Cindy put her apron over her face, and laid her head on the boy's shoulder to conceal her blushes.

"There, there, sissy," he said, stroking her hair, and thinking how delicate was the pink of the little ear, framed between the blue-checked apron and the red-gold braid; "there, there, I did n't mean to say anything wrong."

"I do n't s'pose there's anything wrong

about it," came in a smothered voice from his shoulder, "only—only—"

"Only what, 'Cindy?"

"Only—I—I—never thought of it before," with an innocent sigh.

"O, I 'spect not," returned Joe, in matter-of-fact superiority. "'T wa'n't at all necessary. There 's time enough for that after we 've got the old place clear, and made Daddy Waugh a free man. That 's what we 're going to do first, ain't it, 'Cindy?"

"I believe you will, Joe," she said, looking up earnestly into his eyes, willing to pay homage to the king, now that he had surrendered, and doing so with the subtle self-obliteration which is the crucial test of womanly devotion.

"Of course we will," responded Joe, refusing to accept the proffered adulation. "We 've done the hardest part of it already. It did n't look very bright when I set off to board the Queen, and you stopped at home to take care of things and look after Daddy Waugh, did it,

‘Cindy? But I’ve got twenty-five dollars toward paying off the mortgage, and I may be able to spare a little more.”

The boy spoke proudly, and laid the bills in the girl’s hand as he did so. They were the first fruits of his manhood, and he felt that he was entitled to enjoy her approval of all the courage and self-denial they attested. She took the little roll of bills, opened it, and counted them carefully. She had never seen so much money at one time before. After she had counted them, she put her arms about the boy’s neck, her cheeks aglow with honest pride, and said in a tone of irrepressible exultation:

“O Joe, you are so good—so good!”

“No, I ain’t good,” he protested; “’t ain’t nothing more ’n any other boy ’d ’ve done—nor as much as a good many, perhaps. ’T was all I could do, though. I was afraid Daddy Waugh’d get discouraged, it came so slow. Five dollars a month for five months; you see it’s just twenty-five dollars. I’ve got a little

more, 'cause the captain gave me a chance for extras, but I can't let it all go, you know."

"Certainly not," asserted 'Cindy, not knowing any reason in the world why not, but sure that the bustling lad who had already earned and saved so much must be quite right in any business deductions he might make. She had much the same regard for him that a curbstome broker has for the opinions of a Vanderbilt or a Jay Gould.

"You see, I may not be at home this winter," Joe continued, with a provoking air of mystery.

"Not at home this winter! Why, where will you be?" Surprise, almost alarm, was in her voice.

"In Buffalo."

"Buffalo?" There was no mistaking the alarm now.

"Yes," unconcernedly. "I've had an offer of a job there for the winter."

"And you're going to be there all winter?"

Then there was silence. She was twisting

the bills about her fingers as carelessly and unconsciously as if she were the daughter of a millionaire.

"But do you think, Joe, you ought to leave grandpa so long? You know the winter is a hard time for him."

"I've thought of it," said Joe, seriously, "and the chores and all that. Of course, you could n't do them—and there could n't but one of us go to school if I was at home."

"No," sighed the girl. She was fond of her books, was the best scholar in the district school, and the one wish of her heart was to attend the academy for a few terms, so that she might be able to teach. "Of course not,—it would n't be safe, and is n't necessary. I could study at home, and you could help me evenings."

That was the way 'Cindy put it. Ever since Daddy Waugh had become so infirm as to require attendance, they had taken their schooling "turn and turn about," as the old man expressed it, Joe going to school in the winter, and 'Cindy in the summer. But no matter

whose turn it was in the school-house, it was the girl's thirst for knowledge that kept them at their best.

"Well," said Joe, "you see I thought we might get a student to board, who would look after the chores, and perhaps help you with your studies, too. There won't be much to do. I shall look after the wood before I leave, and you'll have everything handier and plentier than we've had in a long time."

"That's true," sighed the girl, as they wandered on toward the spring. The sun had gone down, but the full October moon made the orchard as light as day. The girl put her checked apron over her head, and shivered slightly. Joe put his arm around her, and drew her to him.

"It's chilly, 'Cindy, but I want to talk to you about these things. You know we'll have to settle them ourselves, and bring Daddy Waugh around to 'em afterwards."

There is a good deal of warmth in a boy's arm, but 'Cindy thought only of the earnest

tones, and kept saying to herself: "How good he is!" They were an odd pair of lovers—perhaps they were not lovers at all. Those who write about lovers seem not to find any such, nowadays, at least. They were not at all jealous or suspicious, nor were they inclined to forget that there were others in the world besides themselves. There was nothing mean nor petty about their affection for each other, and neither had any idea of making the other suffer, or of suffering themselves, because of their attachment. They talked of the future as unconsciously as if they had but one life to parcel out, and each had an equal share in its pleasures and duties. Surely it could not be love, for a man who professes to know more about affairs of heart than anybody else has written: "Such things may once have happened—in Arcadia—but never in America." And as Joe and 'Cindy were in America, not in Arcadia, they could not have been lovers. Yet one can not help wishing they had been. It would be sweet to read again of a pure love, tainted

neither with suspicion nor shame, and to think that young Americans could believe in and desire such love. So let us believe that Joe and 'Cindy were real lovers of the best and truest type—those who think not of themselves so much, but of others more, as they stood in the orchard and talked. He told her of his opportunity and plans. She would not assent until he spoke of going to school. To her, knowledge was the golden key to prosperity, happiness, and honor. She saw at once that such an experience would be valuable to him, and with a sigh she surrendered her own sweet dream of a happy winter, never once mentioning that she had been dreaming, lest she should mar the happiness of the boy who had suddenly become much more of a man than any one but she suspected.

When the question was settled, they started to the house to submit the matter to Daddy Waugh, and persuade him, if persuasion were needed, to concur.

Chapter IX.

THE APPLE-CROP.

“THE old orchard is just outdoing itself this year, ain’t it?” said Joe, as they strolled back under the laden branches, their feet every now and then slipping and stumbling over the fallen apples that lay thick among the rank herbage.

“Yes, indeed,” answered ‘Cindy, “and the best of it is, there is hardly any fruit in the whole country around. It seems almost wicked to say it, but I can’t help being real glad, for it makes our apples worth so much more. I am sorry for them that will be without, but it does seem like a real Providence that our trees should be so full, and such nice fruit too, when it is scarce everywhere else. Grandpa says he thinks every apple on the trees has been engaged by folks who will come right here for them, with nothing to do but pick ‘em and measure ‘em up—no barreling or hauling at all.”

It was 'Cindy's turn to tell of the summer's doings, and she was to the full as enthusiastic about what had happened in and around the Hip-roof House as her companion had been of the events on board the Queen.

"Grandpa says it'll make your words good, and more too. He thinks it'll pay off a third of the mortgage, and perhaps half of it; but I think it'll do more than that. You see all the apples are engaged for the market price at the gathering-time, and grandpa has put it down in writing, and had it signed every time, so there can't be any mistake or trouble about it."

"That was a good idea," said the boy approvingly: "that's the way they do business in the cities."

"O, he's been very careful and anxious," continued 'Cindy, "and when he shows you his book of orders, you must n't let him know that I've told you anything. He's awfully proud of it, and has kept it with such care, saying all the time that with a boy to go away and earn money, and a girl to stay at home and take care

of him, the least he could do was to look after the business for them. You see hé calls it all yours, and tells everybody they are your apples, and that you 'll have to approve the contracts. He would n't make no definite engagement for the winter apples, because he said he did n't know what your plans were; but all them that spoke for fruit were told they could have whatever quantity they named, if you had n't made any other arrangements. Everybody kind o' laughed at his childishness, but said 'all right,' they 'd take 'em on that condition. They knew, of course, that you would n't be looking up a market for apples in Buffalo or any other big city."

"Well, that 's just where they made a mistake," said Joe, proudly.

"What!" exclaimed the girl. "You do n't mean to say you 've sold 'em? That would be too bad! You see, most of the folks who have bought are farmers down in the southern part of the county along the State road, where

there are no apples at all this year. They've just taken a few bushels apiece for their families. I suspect they mean them for a surprise to their wives and children. I should hate ever so much to have them disappointed."

"O, I hain't sold 'em," said Joe, "but I've found out what the market price is, and what I can get for just as many as I am a mind to take down the lake. I've got it in black and white, too, from men who deal in 'em, and want 'em mighty bad. You see, there's hardly any apples anywhere, and what there are, are poor. One man said, and wrote it down too, that he'd take a thousand barrels if I'd get 'em there before November, so 't he could ship 'em by canal. Captain Moxom says he'll take all we care to send down to Buffalo on the Queen and not charge a cent for freight. That, you see, will leave us just the market rate clear, except the barrels and hauling, for the merchants there take 'em at the dock. The Golden Sweets and Harvest apples that you sent I got a dollar a

bushel for; and if I'd known as much as I do now, and had the time to look around, I should have got more."

"You don't say!" exclaimed the girl, in amazement. "Why, we sold 'em to the teamsters and people traveling the road for ten cents a peck, and grandpa said that was extraordinary. I don't think he would ever have thought of charging more 'n half that if a gentleman had n't stopped the stage one day, and asked for some apples. He took a dozen or so, and wanted to know how much he should pay. Grandpa told him he was welcome to them; he had n't ever sold apples by the dozen, he said, and did n't 'low he ever should. Then the stranger asked what he would take for a peck, and when grandpa told him he s'posed about five cents, he threw me a quarter, and said it was a sin to sell such apples at that rate. The driver told me that there was n't any other apples on his run, and said if I'd have a peck or so ready every day, he did 'nt doubt his passengers would take 'em all. So, after that, I al-

ways had a basketful ready as long as the early apples lasted, and sometimes sold two or three pecks to the travelers in the stage. After that came the Pound Sweets and the Pumpkin Sweets and the little 'Nutmegs,'—the nicest this year they ever were. I tried to save a few for you, but am afraid they have all rotted. I'll see when we go in. Then came the Pearmain and the Fall Pippins and the Bellybonds." 'Cindy had never heard of *Belles et bonnes*, and would have been surprised to know that she was talking French. "After a while I began to ask fifteen cents for a basketful, but I did not let grandpa know I got more than ten. I hope it was n't wrong. Nobody ever complained, and I was afraid to say anything about it, for fear he would n't let me do it.

"But the teamsters going to and from the harbor took the most of them. You know they used always to stop and help themselves to 'Old Killis Waugh's' apples just as free as if they'd been their own. They began to do the same this year, and I kept begging grandpa to put up

a sign or get a dog, or contrive some way to stop 'em, but he would n't. Seemed as if he was ashamed to think anybody should n't be free to take just as many apples from the orchard at the Hip-roof House as they wanted. 'We never forbid 'em in your grandma's time,' he would say, 'and I can't bear to think of doing it now.'

"They stripped the trees by the roadside, and seemed likely to run off with all that were ripe, till one day I could n't stand it any longer. Two or three men had stopped, and were picking 'em up in baskets, while one was up in the tree shaking them down. I went out and told them they must n't take our apples. They laughed, and, though they were n't real impudent, they did n't pay no attention to me, but just talked slangy, and went right on picking up the apples, kind of saying at me that they took 'em because they wanted 'em, and that was reason enough. One of the teams had on a load of cheese, and as they would n't stop taking the apples, I climbed over the fence, got up in the

wagon, rolled out one of the cheeses, and started toward the house with it.

“The man it belonged to happened to be the one in the tree, and did n’t see me till the others hollered to him that I was carrying it off. Then he sputtered and stormed and cursed, and told them to stop me. They asked what I was doing. I told them as they had told me; I was taking the cheese because I wanted it, and if that was a good enough reason for taking apples, I thought it was good enough for taking cheese. So I went on to the house, and locked the cheese in the pantry. Presently, along came the teamster, swearing awfully and vowing he’d get out a warrant for stealing. That frightened me, and I think I would have gone and given it back right away; but when the others came in and saw grandpa, and how bad off he was, they seemed abashed like, and tried not to let the first one talk so bad, but he kept right on swearing.”

“I wish I had been there,” said the boy, clenching his fists, with flashing eyes.

"O, I would n't have had it for the world! I do believe they would have killed you!"

"Not much," was the answer. "But how did it end?"

"Well, it happened that just about that time Lawyer Marvin, who represents the man that holds the mortgage, came in to get some apples himself. When he found out what was going on, you just ought to 've heard the setting up he gave those men. They 'd been talking bad enough, but he talked a deal worse, only it was all proper, you know. He told 'em how things were; what hard times we were having trying to pay off the mortgage; how Killis Waugh had set out and nursed and cared for the orchard, and raised and given away 'most all the apple-trees in the country round, never refusing anybody all the apples they could eat or carry away in their hands or pockets. Then he called them 'cowards' and 'hogs' and 'thieves;' told them that I had done just right, and that if they did n't pay grandpa ten dollars, he 'd have

a warrant against them for stealing, as soon as he could drive over to Squire Bartlet and swear it out. Grandpa, he kept protesting, but Mr. Marvin was just grand. I did n't know a man could make other men so afraid of him by his words."

"You 'd ought to see Captain Moxom," said Joe, anxious for the fame of his hero.

"Well, he could n't beat Mr. Marvin, I'm sure. Why, those men just backed out of the house, and after a while came back as humble as you please with the ten dollars. And one of 'em said he 'd a good deal rather pay that much more, than have it known he 'd been in such a dirty mean scrape. They did n't mean anything wrong, he said; were just thoughtless-like, and hoped Mr. Waugh and the young lady would forgive them for their rudeness, and forget it. You see, I've got to be a young lady since you went away, sir," she added, coquettishly.

"Well, you ought to be after that. It was

rather hard to make them pay so much, though," said the boy, whose earnings had made him sympathetic with capital.

"That 's what grandpa thought. He said he did n't suppose they had taken more 'n a dollar's worth of apples, and he was n't going to take money of a neighbor, just because he 'd done wrong unthoughtedly."

"They ought to have paid for acting so, though."

"That 's what Lawyer Marvin said, and proposed a compromise, as he called it; that they should each take five dollars worth of apples at the market price. This they all agreed to, the man that owned the cheese saying he 'd throw that in. So, after it was all settled, grandpa asked them to stay to dinner, and Lawyer Marvin, he staid too. We had lots of eggs and ham and potatoes, and I made some biscuits and had a big loaf of Indian bread, a plate of beans baked the Saturday before, and this was Monday, and I have n't seen such grand times here since I can remember."

"That was good," said Joe, heartily. "I b'lieve Daddy Waugh 'll get around yet. If folks only realized what he 's done, and how good he is, there would n't be no doubt of it—"

"Lawyer Marvin said just that," interrupted 'Cindy. "And the men from down the road agreed with him, too; and they 're coming for their apples this week. O, they were real nice men when you come to know them, but they frightened me awfully at first."

"Naturally," said the boy, patronizingly.

"But the best thing about it was after they had gone," said the girl, flushing even in the moonlight. "I went into the pantry, and found they 'd come round, I s'pose after we thought they had gone, tore the slats off the window, and put in two other cheeses, as big again as the one I took, and left a note, saying they were a present to the young lady 'who fell among thieves.' Was n't that good?"

"First rate," assented Joe.

"But that was n't all. They told about it, all up and down the road, and there has n't a

man nor a boy touched one of those apples since. I don't know exactly, but I think grandpa must have something near fifty dollars in the drawer under his work-bench, and he thinks there'll be four hundred bushels of winter apples, which at a quarter of a dollar a bushel—"

"A quarter of a dollar a bushel!" exclaimed Joe. "We'll see about that!"

Chapter X.

DRIVING A BARGAIN.

IT was a busy week at the Hip-roof House that followed Joe's return. Both Daddy Waugh and Joe were fearful that their anticipations might be too great; but neither had begun to estimate the real yield of the old orchard, and the week's work only showed that another was waiting to be done. During the seven days, however, Joe rose from the rank of "Killis Waugh's Boy" to be the undoubted head of the establishment. Daddy Waugh alone was unaware of his kindly deposition. He still planned and planned exceedingly well, as he had always done—for others; the only trouble with his life having been an inability to carry out his own designs. Fortunately this duty was now intrusted to one who had been trained under the Captain of the Queen.

Two of the neighbors had been engaged long

in advance, and were on hand bright and early on the Monday morning after Joe's return. One of them brought his wagon and a team of mules to assist in taking the fruit to the barn, where it was to be stored until sold, or the coming of cold weather. Probably Daddy Waugh had never in his life given so many orders as his active executive suggested, revised, and transmitted to the orchard from the old man's seat upon the porch, during the momentous week.

Before the first day ended, Daddy Waugh had received a new title, and was called "Captain," as generally as he had previously been known as "Squire" or "Daddy." Joe had been so accustomed to refer to the "Captain" as the source of authority, that when he took charge of the workers in the orchard under Daddy Waugh's instructions, he unconsciously continued the old habit, saying:

"The 'Captain' says we're to begin on this tree of 'Signiferders' (Seek-no-Furtherers) 'cause they're right here in the way, an'll get all

tramped and smashed up if we carry the others over 'em."

"That 's the Captain's orders, is it?" asked one of the hired men, with a good-natured smile. The other chuckled, and 'Cindy, who was standing by, her sleeves rolled up and her dish-pan under her arm waiting to see the day's work begun before she commenced the unusual task of providing dinner for so many—'Cindy laughed outright.

"Guess you forgot you were n't on the Queen, did n't you, Joe?" asked the neighbor.

"No, I did n't," said the boy, promptly, but hardly truthfully, it is to be feared.

"Well, who do you call Captain when you 're ashore?" asked the man who had first spoken.

"Daddy Waugh, of course," answered Joe. "He 's captain and owner; 'Cindy 's cook; I 'm cabin-boy, and you and your mules is 'all hands.' "

This sally was greeted by a burst of laughter. The man who had made the inquiry was a bit

of a wag himself, and, though he hardly relished the classification, he admitted the fairness of the hit. The other man was one of those who never have a funny thought, except by suggestion. To him, the idea that his companion had been trapped in his own joke was indescribably ludicrous. He was a man of middle age, round-faced, thick set, and noted throughout the neighborhood as good-natured and hard working. His name was Wellman—most inappropriately pronounced Melancthon. He was eating an apple when the conversation began, having picked a soft one from among the fallen Seek-no-Furtherers, which he carefully pared with a large jack-knife, and was transferring to his mouth in liberal sections with the same instrument. His teeth were rather poor, and mastication was not only a laborious but a somewhat noisy process. When the force of Joe's reply became fully apparent to him, a quick inhalation succeeded by a sudden exhalation, carried with it a shower of fragments of half-masticated apple,

and he commenced coughing almost as soon as he began to laugh.

"O—you've—got—it—now!" he choked, pointing his finger at his companion, coughing and laughing loud enough to be heard a mile away, the half-eaten apple in one hand and the knife in the other, tears in his eyes, and his face red with exertion.

Wellman's mirth was contagious. The day seemed about to open with undisturbed gayety and the most cordial relations between the young foreman and his hands—hands who, it must be remembered, were very jealous in that day of oversight and direction—had not another party made his appearance on the scene. 'Siah Perkins had come around the corner of the house during the general mirth, and at its conclusion, asked:

"Well, what's the fun? I heard the great harvestin' was to begin to-day, an' thought I'd just come over an' see if the neighborhood was all goin' to get rich off a hundred or two old

apple-trees. Ye do n't seem to have made much headway, yit. Seems ez ef ye must have got choked all 'round on the fust apple ye picked—an' that a win'fall, I should jedge," looking at the half-eaten one in Wellman's hand.

That worthy had recovered his breath, and was nettled by Perkins's remark.

"Well, we hain't done much, yet," he said; "but we 're gettin' ready for work in a way you do n't often try."

"Yes—how 's that?" asked Perkins, with his nasal drawl.

"Havin' a good laugh at a square joke," responded Wellman.

"Yes—one of Hi Barnes's jokes, I s'pose?"

"Not much," said Barnes, who had taken a basket, and was picking from the lower limbs of the Seek-no-Further tree. "Not much, Squire, Hi Barnes was at the wrong end of this joke, and got hit between the eyes. That's what came so near choking Wellman to death."

'Cindy had gone into the house on the ap-

pearance of Perkins, and Joe having placed a ladder in the fork of the tree, climbed into it to begin picking.

"Must have been a good joke if Wellman got it off," said Perkins, with the sneer that characterized all he said.

"But as it happens, it was n't Wellman's," replied that individual, still more tartly.

"Not yours? Whose could it 'a' been? The gal's ruther young fer sech things."

Joe dropped his basket half way up the ladder, and came down after it. His face was white, but he said nothing.

Barnes, who was quick-witted enough to divine Perkins's intention to annoy, answered:

"No, it was Joe's. He's come home from the lake mighty smart, an' took me up so quick it 'most made my head swim."

"You do n't tell," drawled Perkins. "I heard he's come out mightily, considerin' he was raised by Killis Waugh, an' was a foundlin' to begin with. I see he can climb a ladder as

well as any sailor, ef it's solid an' he has two chances at it."

Joe disappeared in the tree just as Perkins said this, and the allusion to his sailor-like dexterity raised a ripple of laughter.

"But what was the joke?" Perkins continued. "I'm dying to know."

Barnes, still hoping to mollify the newcomer, told the story with various embellishments.

"So, that was it?" said Perkins. "Would n't have been so bad if it had been the truth. You an' Wellman may do well enough to put alongside with the mules, but old man Killis Waugh ain't the owner, not by a jug-full."

Joe's hands trembled as he put the yellowish-green, red-streaked apples into his basket.

"He not only ain't the owner, but he hain't got any more tittle here 'n one of you. He may have what the lawyers call an equity, but even that ain't no ways sartin."

"'T ain't your fault he's got that," said the boy in the tree.

The men laughed.

"Highly-tighty," sneered Perkins. "How grand folks is gittin'. Next we know, neighbors, we'll have to take off our hats to the paupers in the poor-house."

The laugh died down, and the men pulled with needless bluster at the overhanging branches.

"Of course, it 's all my fault, though I did n't do nothing only what the law allowed. I wanted my money—needed it—an' who 's goin' to blame me for gettin' it? Was it any of my fault that Killis Waugh had n't sense enough to take care of what he had, and so got in debt, and after that took to keepin' paupers free of charge to the county? He never was of any account, an' has lived so long on the charity of them he owes, that I s'pose he 's just sense enough left to think he owns the whole earth. That 's the way with that sort generally."

The boy came down from the tree without the aid of a ladder, and walked straight towards

the speaker. His eyes flashed, his cheeks were pale, and his fists clenched.

"Mr. Perkins, you can't speak that way about Daddy Waugh 'round here," he said, firmly.

"Can't, eh?" queried the man, who, though evidently surprised, had no thought of modifying his language. "I'd like to know who's to hender me if I choose to do as I'm a mind to?"

"I will," said Joe, coming closer.

"Better keep off, bub," said Perkins, flourishing a switch he held. "I cut this on the way, not thinkin' I'd have any use for it, but it'll do to lick one of Killis Waugh's beggar brats as well as anything."

"Mr. Perkins," said Joe, deliberately, though his voice trembled with rage, "I don't mind what you say about me, but you shan't abuse Daddy Waugh where I am. You've got to be respectful, or keep off the premises."

"Not till somebody comes that's able to put me off," said Perkins, switching the sapling in the boy's face.

"Wal, that's right now," put in Wellman,

throwing down his basket and coming forward, his hands twitching nervously.

"What business is it of yours, Lank Wellman?" asked Perkins, insolently.

"Do n't try none o' yer brass on me, 'Siah Perkins. I'm not goin' to stan' by an' hear you abuse the boy, nor Killis Waugh either. The boy 's doin' his duty, which is more 'n anybody ever accused you o' tryin' to do. I do n't want no trouble, but I ain't afraid o' ye. You jest git out o' here now, or I shall help you in a way you won't like."

"You 'd better tend to yer apple-pickin'. That 's what ye 're hired to do."

"Do n't tempt me to put my hand on ye, 'Siah Perkins," said the sturdy farmer, advancing threateningly. "I'm a peaceable man, but I might be inclined to settle some old scores if I should."

"Better travel, Perkins," shouted Barnes. "'T ain't safe to fool with Wellman when he gets his dander up."

"I came here on business, and I've a right

to stay till I git through with it," answered Perkins sulkily, retreating a step or two.

"State your business then, or leave," said Wellman, following him up.

"My business is with Killis Waugh."

"Think you can abuse him 'cause he 's old and a cripple, do ye? If ye 've got any business, say what 't is."

"I shall go in the house and tell it to Mr. Waugh," said Perkins, with dignity.

"Not m-m-m-much, you won't," came a voice from the back door, which suddenly framed the gaunt form and stubby face of Jesse Newlin.

"What have you got to do with it?" asked Perkins, turning on the newcomer.

"Nothin' m-m-much," said Newlin, stepping down the path, expectorating vigorously as he came, "only that b-b-boy 's a mate o' mine, ye know, an' there do n't nobody that sails on the Queen allow any outsider to pick on one o' her men—m-more especially on that b-b-b-boy. D 'ye understand?"

It would have been difficult to mistake the mate's words, accompanied though they were with a liberal garniture of oaths.

"Better go 'fore ther 's any more fuss," advised Wellman, transformed at once into a peacemaker by the advent of Newlin. "These sailors are mighty rough sometimes."

"But I came to buy apples," protested Perkins, meekly.

"Took a queer way to trade," grinned Barnes.

"Better go—better go," repeated Wellman, shaking his head warningly, as he picked up his basket and returned to his work.

"But I 've got to have 'em," again protested Perkins.

"You have, eh? Then you 'd better go where ye can git 'em," said the mate. "Did n't ye hear Joe say ye could n't git 'em here?"

"What 's he got to do with it? They ain't his."

"Wal, he represents the Cap'n, an' there ain't

no man goin' to question anything Joe's Cap'n says while I 'm around."

"What 's the reason I can't have 'em? Ain't they for sale?" asked Perkins, whiningly.

"Not to you," said Joe.

"But I 'll pay a good price," continued Perkins, anxiously. "Come now, I 'll take back all I said, an' pay thirty cents a bushel for a hundred bushels."

"You can't have a bushel for less than one dollar," answered Joe, stoutly.

"But I ve *got* to have 'em! Lord bless ye, I 've contracted 'em."

"Wal, then, pay for 'em," said Newlin. "Ye 've heard the price."

"O, I can't pay any such price as that."

"Then quit talkin'. Joe 's named his figgers, an' I 'll bet he knows what he 's about."

"But a dollar 's jest what I was to git for 'em, barreled and delivered at the harbor, do n't ye see?" said Perkins, piteously.

"What on airth was ye sellin' what ye had n't got, for?" asked Newlin. "Ye knew there

was n't any apples in a day's drive in any direction, only these."

"That 's jest it," was the reply. "You see, it was I had the mortgage, and I made no sort of doubt but what I'd have the place, too, before this time. So when a city man offered me one dollar a bushel for two hundred bushels to be delivered at the harbor this week, I took him up, an' signed writings to that effect. Of course, as I did n't git the place it upset all my calculations, an' if I do n't deliver the apples, the man that bought 'em 'll be onto me for damages."

"An' good enough for ye," said the mate. "Near 's I can see ye, ye 've acted like a mean, dirty sneak, an' deserve to smart for it—d 'ye hear? Smart for it—smart for it, I say."

"That 's so," said Wellman to Barnes, with a shrug.

"That 's what a man gits fer actin' like a fool an' then tellin' on 't," put in Barnes, dryly.

At this Wellman was roused to approving laughter.

"The boy 's got him," he said, "and you see he ain't goin' to let up on him. I would n't neither."

"Pshaw, yes, you would. You would let a rat out of a trap if he squealed."

"May be that 's so," admitted Wellman. "I can't stand such things,—never could. Believe I'll tell Joe not to be too hard on the fellow."

"You let the boy alone. He knows his business and his man, too."

But the kind-hearted neighbor could not restrain his desire to intercede, even for the man with whom he had "some old scores" to settle. "I say, Joe," he said, coming close to the boy, "could n't ye let up on him a little?"

The boy looked up sidewise, and said through his teeth:

"Not a single cent!"

"Ye hear that," said Newlin to Perkins. "Now ef ye want to buy apples, here 's yer chance. Apples is plenty, an' the market 's good. What 'd ye say?"

"I'll tell ye, Joe, do n't let 's have hard

feelin's now; 't ain't neighborly. I'll let ye have the contract out an' out, an' not charge a cent fer it."

"Do n't want it. Got just as good offers in my pocket, and can do better yet. You see the Queen carries our apples for nothing," said the boy, proudly.

"That 's jest what she does, gentlemen," exclaimed Newlin. "Heard the Cap'n say so, myself. By George, I never thought of it, but it 's jest bringin' the city here for the boy, ain't it? That ends it. What d'ye say? I can't wait, but I've got ter see this matter settled 'fore I go, ef Mis' Newlin takes the last hair off when I git back."

"I s'pose I'll have to take 'em," sighed Perkins, "unless I can see Killis Waugh. He would n't ever treat a neighbor so."

"Why, you just said he had nothing to do with the apples," laughed Barnes.

"Well, I s'pose he hain't, but he might induce Joe to be a little reasonable. I don't know 's the boy's got any better right 'n the

old man, but he seems to have everybody on his side," snarled Perkins.

So it was arranged that Perkins should take two hundred bushels at a dollar a bushel in the orchard, and should pay cash when picked and delivered. It was the first time in the history of that region that such a price had been paid for apples, and the story of Si Perkins's trade with a boy is a matter of tradition yet.

Newlin had driven over to tell Joe he had written the Captain that he could not return at the end of the week, but would have to remain at least one more. "You see," he said, with a grim attempt at a smile, "I found I'd got to git Mis' Newlin settled for the winter, jest a leetle better 'n she 'd been ef I come home, or else I need n't ever look for quarters there agin. Now, that can't be done in a week. So I wrote to the Cap'n, an' told him from what I heered I jedged you 'd have your hands full for about the same time; an' he need n't be lookin' for either of us till the next trip. But ef you keep on makin' sech trades as this here, you 'll

be buyin' up the Queen, out 'n out, or settin' up an opposition, 'fore long."

"That 's what I mean to do," laughed Joe, "but not till Cap'n Moxom gits through with her."

Newlin drove home, and Joe returned to the orchard to find himself already regarded as one born to success. There was no questioning his authority, nor inclination to disregard his directions after that day. Before the first week was ended, it became a common saying in the neighborhood that "that boy Joe was a driver," and "no fool either." Some even went so far as to say that he was "doin' better for old man Killis than that worthy had ever done for himself." 'Cindy grew very proud of her playmate, and when they figured it all up just before his departure—for he determined to report on board the Queen at the specified time whether Newlin did or not—they found that they would be able to pay two hundred and fifty dollars on the hated mortgage, and both the girl and Daddy Waugh looked upon Joe

as a sort of domestic hero. But he would not listen to their praise.

"Wait a while," he said; "wait until it's all paid off. I'll take what we can spare to Lawyer Marvin to-morrow, and find just what the balance is. I've an idea we'll lift the whole before you know it. Remember there's a good lot of apples yet, after all that'll be needed to fill your contracts, gran'pa, and I mean to make them count. We'd better save money enough to barrel 'em up and store 'em on the barn floor, so 't I can send for them any day. Wellman will tend to that, and haul them when we want them."

That night Daddy Waugh dreamed the mortgage was paid off, and the Hip-roof House transformed into a sumptuous palace, and Joe and 'Cindy the king and queen of the new realm. It had been many a year since he had known such happiness asleep or awake.

Chapter XI.

THE CAPTAIN'S ORDERS.

IT was nearly sundown on the Monday assigned for Joe's departure, when he set out to drive to the harbor, where he was to meet the Queen on her downward trip some time the next morning. The time was not very exact. "Between three o'clock and sunrise," was as definite a statement as Newlin would venture to make in regard to the Queen's arrival. One thing was sure; she would not wait. Other boats had been known to wait for passengers; but the Queen, if she had but one aboard, got him to his destination as soon as possible. The captain's idea of duty to the traveling public was a curious one for those times. He held that he owed more to the passenger aboard than to the one who was coming, and was just as much bound to make his best time for one as for a thousand. So Joe started the night before.

There had been so much to do, and her time had been so fully occupied during Joe's brief sojourn at home, that 'Cindy had no opportunity to attend to the thousand little things she had designed for his comfort. She had not expected him to be away all winter, and bemoaned the fact that she had not prepared his stockings and mittens, and all that would be needful for his comfort during the long months he would be shut up in the Queen in the frozen harbor at Buffalo. It seemed to her a very desperate outlook, and when the kit was at length packed, and she came to say good-bye to him, she felt almost as badly as if he had been going on a voyage of Arctic exploration. It might be a matter of doubt, however, whether the prospect of his loneliness or her own separation from him was the cause of her tears.

Daddy Waugh was so proud of the lad's achievements that he forgot his own infirmities in giving anxious injunctions as to the health and safety of the young life on which he leaned so confidently. He asked over and over again

his wishes in regard to everything about the Hip-roof House, and seemed more desirous of comprehending the boy's plans than of elucidating his own—a most remarkable thing in Killis Waugh, and to be accounted for only on the hypothesis that he failed to distinguish between Joe's plans and his own, just as the boy failed to find any distinction between his own interest and that of the household of which he was a part.

Besides the little bundle containing his wardrobe, Joe took with him some well-filled bags of the best "eating apples," as he called them, meaning those already ripe and mellow, and also a small bag containing samples of the late-keeping varieties, of which there was still a supply remaining on hand in the old orchard.

Everybody in the region had heard of the good fortune which had attended his efforts to lift the mortgage, and as the neighbor who had made it convenient to go to the harbor at that particular time, drove through the village, the boy was the recipient of many congratula-

tions and good wishes. As is always the case, success lay at the root of this appreciation of his good qualities. He might have done and suffered a hundred times more for the sake of the man whose kindness he was striving to repay, and only have received pitying glances of half-contemptuous approval. It was his first lesson in the great truth which governs human life from palace to hovel,—that success commands approbation while failure elicits contempt. But the world was to him still all sunshine. He only wondered vaguely, as they rode toward the harbor, why it was that he had never known there were so many good people in Curtinville before. It warmed his heart, and made the outlook upon life very sweet, to know so many were interested in his welfare. He had bidden them all good-bye until some time in the spring, but more than one had ventured the cheering prophecy that they would not see him again until he was running his own boat.

These sanguine prophets were not only confounded, but the village was thrown into a fever

of excitement when, on the third day afterwards, dusty and travel-worn, Joe Thompson in his sailor's rig, without any bundle or parcel whatever, sprang from the west-bound stage on its arrival, and, without stopping for speech with any one, made his way at once to Lawyer Marvin's office. After remaining closeted a short time with the new arrival, that functionary appeared in what the onlookers deemed a state of unusual excitement, ordered a conveyance from Rogers's livery stable, the sign of which hung beside the entrance to the undertaker's shop, in which, in company with his wife and Joe, the village magnate had driven off in the direction of the Hip-roof House, leaving the village all agog with speculation as to what had happened, or was about to happen.

The truth is that Lawyer Marvin was as much surprised as any one, when, in response to his "Come in," Joe entered, cap in hand, as if on duty aboard the Queen.

"Why, bless my soul," he exclaimed, with a start, "if it is n't Joe! Thought you were in

Buffalo before this! What are you doing here, young man?"

"Captain's orders, sir," replied Joe, touching his forelock, and handing a letter to the lawyer.

"What the mischief does this mean?" asked the attorney, after he had glanced over the mis-sive, "do you know the contents of this letter?"

"No, sir,"

"Well, well, wonders will never cease. What do you suppose Captain Moxom has written to me here?"

"Do n't know, sir. He told me to deliver that to you without delay, and do just as you should direct."

"Was that all?"

"Every word, sir."

"When was that?"

"About an hour before the stage started from Buffalo night before last."

"And you've been on the road ever since?"

"Of course."

"Well, you must be tired."

"A little."

"Had any dinner?"

"No; I thought I'd get that after I'd done my errand."

"You did? Well, you were right, but it is n't every boy who would have thought so. Sit down, and we'll see what can be done for you. Jane," he called, opening the side door of his office, which adjoined the house in which he lived.

His wife came in response to the summons, and was asked with serio-comic gravity, if she had anything in the house that would occupy the attention of a boy, who had had no dinner and ridden all night, for a few minutes, while her husband did some writing. The reply was speedy and abundant, and while his host wrote, Joe ate.

"What have you been doing to Captain Moxom, anyhow?" asked the lawyer, curiously, as he paused to fold a paper, sanding it carefully and bending it over with his thumb.

"Done to him? Nothing. Why?"

"Have n't bewitched him, or anything of the sort?"

"Captain Moxom is n't one of that kind."

"Ha, ha! Guess you are right there. But what have you done to please him so well?"

"I obey orders, sir."

"You do, eh? Where are you going when your errand here is completed?"

"Wherever you say; that's what he told me to do."

"Suppose I send you to—Texas?"—a region much talked of at that time as the resort of those whom society had no special desire to retain any nearer the centers of civilization.

"Suppose I 'd have to go."

"If I should n't give you anything to do, what then?"

"Go back to the Queen."

"You are about right. You obey orders evidently, and I expect that's what's the matter with 'Old Ironsides,' as we used to call him.

Never knew him to take a fancy to any one before, and I've known him since we were boys at school together. No, I'm wrong. He did have a sweetheart once that he seemed to think the world of; but she jilted him because she could n't find any place to get hold on, I guess. At least, nothing ever came of it, and I've always thought that was the reason he remained a bachelor. This is extraordinary, though,—extraordinary."

The lawyer meditated a moment, then went on with his writing. Joe watched him, resuming his repast, which had been interrupted by the attorney's questions. The boy had been wondering, during all the long journey in the stage, what the purport of his errand might be, and the surprise manifested by the lawyer gave still keener edge to his curiosity.

After a time the lawyer stopped writing, read over what he had written, glanced through the letter he had received, wrinkled his forehead, drew down his eyebrows, and looked

under them at Joe in a way so puzzled and incredulous that the boy could not help asking:

“What is it, sir?”

“You say you know nothing at all about the contents of this letter?”

“Not a word, sir.”

“Have you ever done any thing especial for Captain Moxom—I mean, any special favor?”

“Done the Captain any favor? No, indeed; all the favor has been on his side,” answered Joe, flushing with enthusiasm for his hero’s goodness. “Do you know, he offered me a steady job all winter at man’s wages just to stay on the Queen and do nothing, only help watch her and go to school?”

“Indeed!” said the lawyer, with an amused smile, “that was liberal. He did n’t offer you a fur coat and mittens, did he?”

“No,” replied Joe, half in doubt whether to laugh or take offense.

“Nor a cutter and span of horses for your Saturdays?”

“No!” answered the boy, sharply, “he

is n't—" He stopped abruptly, and went to the window, where he stood looking straight before him, with his back to the lawyer.

Mr. Marvin eyed him keenly.

"Well, he is n't—what?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing. That is not what you meant to say."

"No, sir."

"What were you going to say, then?"

"Something I ought not to, sir."

"Why?"

"The captain said he never wanted to hear of my speaking impudently to any one I was sent to on an errand."

"Yes? So you felt like being impudent to me, did you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why?"

"I did not think you ought to speak in the way you did of Captain Moxom, sir."

"What were you going to say in his defense?"

"It was n't in his defense, sir. I like to have told you, he was n't a fool; but you know that, and only said what you did to tease me."

"You seem to think a good deal of the captain."

"It is n't any *seem*, sir," answered the lad, with a hint of tears in his voice.

"You would do a great deal for him, I suppose?"

"I would try to do anything he asked me to?"

"Yes?" meditatively. "Right or wrong?"

"He would n't ask me to do anything wrong," answered the boy, stoutly.

"No?" in the same cool, irritating tone, as if he were badgering a witness. "Well, why not, now? Tell me why not?"

"Because, sir," said the boy, turning on him with flaming face, "because he could n't,—he just *could n't*, sir. Captain Moxom could n't be mean if he tried."

"So?" said the lawyer. "Well, I have no disposition to take issue with you. Sit down, boy, sit down. I did n't mean to say anything

against the captain. I think nearly as much of him as you do, only I'm too old to be quite so positive about it. No doubt you are right—and I do n't wonder at his being fond of you. But, after all,—after all,—this is extraordinary.”

He rose and paced back and forth across his office, as if he had forgotten the boy's presence. Then he said sharply:

“See here, my son, tell me what happened after you went on board the Queen the other day.”

“What happened?” asked the puzzled lad.

“Yes; between you and Captain Moxom.”

“Nothing.”

“O, yes, there did, and I want to know what it was—just for my own satisfaction, you see. Now think,—where did you see him first?”

“Why, when the Queen was coming up to the wharf,” answered Joe, in an animated tone. “There's where one always sees the captain,—if they know where to look for him.”

“Well,” questioned the lawyer, not to be diverted by any side issue, “where was he?”

"Standing by the guard, right in front of the wheel-house, as he always is when we come into port."

"Did he see you at the same time?"

"Of course. He sees everything."

"O, he does?"

"I mean about the boat or dock."

"Did he recognize you?"

"To be sure he did."

"How do you know?"

"Because he waved his hand,—so—" making a slight gesture—"when I saluted him."

"That salute is a new thing on board the Queen, is n't it? One of Moxom's notions?"

"No, sir, it was just an accident-like. You see, that's the way the boys do on the Michigan, the war-ship at Erie, when their officers come 'round. I saw them the first day I was on the Queen. One of 'em came aboard at Erie, and I saw him do it when he spoke to Captain Moxom, and again when he reported to the officer in his own boat. So when Captain Moxom put me on duty, going errands for him every-

where on board or ashore, and told me he wanted I should always be attentive and polite, I supposed that was what he meant. I did n't know much about politeness, only Daddy Waugh had taught me never to speak to a lady with my hat on. I s'pose it must be old-fashioned, 'cause nobody else about here seems to take the trouble to do so, and the boys used to laugh at me for it. But I always obeyed him, so it came easy to take off my cap and salute the captain or any one he sent me to. I found out afterwards that it was a new thing on the lake boats, but the captain seemed to like it and the men, too, so that after a while I got quite proud of it. Everybody on the Queen does it now, and people say they're the most seamanlike crew on the lakes?"

"What else, then?"

"Nothing, sir; I just hurried aboard with my things, and reported for duty as soon as I could change my clothes. You see it was daylight then, and I thought that he'd be looking for me."

"I suppose he was glad to see you?" said the lawyer, with a smile.

"I'm sure I do n't know, sir. He did n't seem very glad."

"What did he say?"

"Just asked me how I came to be aboard at that time."

"And you told him—what?"

"'Cause I agreed to. He asked why I did n't wait for Mr. Newlin; and I told him 'cause I did n't have any leave to. Then he asked had n't Mr. Newlin told me I could stay, and I told him he had. Then he asked why I did n't stay; and I said I did n't know as Mr. Newlin had any authority to say I could."

"Well, what next?"

"He said I had done just right; and he was glad of it. He asked what I had on my old clothes for when I came aboard. You see, they were the very ones I wore when he first saw me. So I told him I thought those he had given me were to be worn when I was working for him, and I did n't want to get 'em all torn

and soiled by wearing them 'bout home, gathering apples and doing such work."

"What did he say to that?"

"Said I was a good boy, sir, and asked me about Daddy Waugh and 'Cindy and all our home matters, just as if he had an interest in 'em himself."

"You do n't tell me!" exclaimed the lawyer, with a chuckle. "That was a strange proceeding for Dave Moxom, was n't it?"

"He 's always been very kind to me, sir," replied the boy, anxious to defend his friend from ridicule. "He used to ask me about matters at the Hip-roof House when I first went aboard. You see, he lived there a while himself when he was a boy."

"So I've heard."

"He knew we 'd been in trouble, too, and I suppose he was interested to learn how we were getting along."

"You told him?"

"Yes, sir. I told him the orchard had done so well I thought we 'd be pretty near able to

pay off the mortgage, perhaps quite, with what I hoped to earn during the winter."

"I guess that surprised him?"

"It did seem to, sir."

"No wonder. Everybody says it's nothing less than a miracle for an old orchard like that to start up all at once and yield such a crop of fruit,—and of such quality, too."

"That's what the captain said; but I told him if it was a miracle, it was one of the common, every-day sort, or else it would n't have happened to Daddy Waugh, or come about through anything he did, being so old and weak."

"Daddy Waugh? What did he have to do with the size of the apple-crop?"

"Everything except make the trees grow," said Joe, earnestly, "and he came pretty near doing that, for he planted 'em."

"But that did n't make them bear this particular year."

"No; Daddy Waugh says that's the Lord's doings, and I suppose it is; but, all the same, it

was because of Daddy Waugh that he came to do it."

"What did the captain say to that?"

"Said I'd have to explain that riddle. He knew Daddy Waugh was a good man, but he did n't believe any one was good enough these days to have miracles worked for their special benefit."

"Did you explain it?"

"Certainly. You see it was n't any miracle at all, but just in the course of nature, only it happened to come at the right time. Some four or five years ago, just the fall before we sold the oxen, a man came along, 'way after dark, and wanted to stay all night. You know Daddy Waugh would n't refuse anybody a meal or a night's lodging if he had n't more 'n a crust for himself."

"I do n't believe he would," said the lawyer, heartily.

"Well, the man staid that night, and the next day he was taken sick, and it was about a month before he got around again. We took

care of him the best we could. Folks told Daddy Waugh he ought to turn him over to the county—it was just after Daddy's stroke, you know, and everybody used to come in and see him; it had n't got to be an old story then,—but he would n't hear to it. Said there had n't anybody ever gone out of the Hip-roof House to the poorhouse yet, and if there ever did, the first one to go would be Killis Waugh. He had n't got much, he said, but he 'd got enough to feed a sick man so long as his appetite was so poor he could n't eat much anyhow; and he was going to do it."

"Just like him," laughed the lawyer. "And that's what has kept him poor."

"It's what's helped him when he needed it most, too," said Joe. "That's what I told the captain. I told him that Daddy Waugh had proved it paid to be good to other folks as well as to one's self, too."

"How did he take that little lesson in morals?"

"Laughed, and said it might be so; but he

did n't see as the old man had enough to show for his goodness to make the wicked very envious."

The lawyer broke into a hearty laugh at this; said he should think not, and asked Joe to go on with his story.

"Well, I told him it had brought him the apples and the orchard and the Hip-roof House and 'Cindy and me, anyhow."

"I understand that last—and a boy and a girl like you and 'Cindy are no mean fortune—but I still fail to see how his kindness resulted directly in this miraculous apple-crop."

"O yes," said the boy, apologetically, "telling you all about the captain, I forgot about that. Well, you see the man—he was an Englishman—when he got well was naturally very grateful to Daddy Waugh. He was a real nice man—not what you would call young—but so young-looking, you 'd never think he had a boy of my age, as he said he had, back in England. It was apple-time when he got about, and he used to sit and help a little when he could, in

gathering them. He told us all about his folks, and how he came over here to better his condition, but everything had gone against him. You see he did not find things as he expected to, and did n't seem to be able to fit himself to them as they were. That 's what Daddy Waugh said was the matter with him."

"There are a good many people who have just that difficulty all their lives," said the lawyer, dryly.

"I suppose so," assented the boy, composedly; "but this man was a sort of nurseryman or gardener for some nobleman in the 'old country,' as he called it, and, having had some quarrel with his master, thought he 'd come to America and be his own man. He had tried hard enough and in ways enough, I'm sure; but with what he had to send home for his family, he had nothing left for himself, and no prospect of getting anything. So he had started West, and thought he would take up some land, and see if he could n't have better luck.

"He knew all about fruits and fruit-trees,

seeing that was his business, and he used to sit and talk with Daddy Waugh about planting and grafting and pruning, until I thought they would n't ever think of anything else. Daddy Waugh explained to him all the different kinds of apples in the orchard. A good many of them, the man said, were seedlings that had never been heard of across the water, and others, he thought, were entirely new, even in this country. He said if he had scions enough, he was sure he could make a good living grafting other orchards, the fruit of which was n't so good as this. He said that's the way they were doing all through the East, but it had n't got out this way yet.

"Then Daddy Waugh told him that all the orchards in the State, so far as he knew, were grown from seeds, and people had n't taken the pains to select those that bore good fruit, as he had done. That's why the Hip-roof orchard was so notable. So, if he could make people believe his grafts would bear the same kind of fruit as Killis Waugh's trees, there

would n't be any doubt 'bout his getting a chance to graft pretty much every orchard in this region, 'cause his trees were known all along the lake-shore from Black Rock to Toledo.

"The Englishman told Daddy that if the old trees were 'worked,' as he called trimming, and scraped, and the ground plowed and dug around the roots some, and a few of the poorest kinds grafted from the best, it would be just as good as new, and better too, for a little while. Daddy said he 'd heard about grafting, but never heard of making old trees over into new ones; but it looked reasonable, and if he had been as able as he was once, he 'd try it. Fruit was getting to be worth something, and the orchard, always a great bearer, was rarely ever hurt by the frost. The man explained that working it would probably change the bearing year—which would have been last year, you know—and the first year or two of growth would probably go to wood, so 't there would n't be many apples; but when it did bear, it would surprise the country.

“And sure enough ’t was all so; for the upshot of it was, the man ‘worked’ the orchard just to his own notion. Everybody said he ’d kill it, and it did look so. You ought to have seen the brush I dragged out and piled up that fall and winter. It made a heap as big as the barn—every bit. We could n’t burn it until it was dry, and it covered the whole hillside below the spring all the next summer. The neighbors said Daddy Waugh was n’t content to plant an orchard, but had to go and bury it, too. It did look like a funeral that year.

“Then we plowed it, and scraped the trees, and washed ’em all over with soap, and put a lot of ashes around the roots. In fact, we worked at ’em all the fall, and again in the spring. Then Daddy gave the Englishman plenty of scions, and he got work out West, bought a place there, and came back the next year for cuttings that had grown the year before. So the old orchard got worked twice, and this year was its first crop. Now, you see, if Daddy Waugh had n’t been good to that man,

the orchard would n't have been worked, and the trees would n't have borne the apples, and we could n't have paid the money on the mortgage."

"Yes, I do see," said the lawyer; "and if he had n't taken care of Joe and 'Cindy when they were little, they could n't have helped him now."

"Of course," assented Joe.

Chapter XII.

APPLES AND KISSES.

“WELL,” mused the lawyer, as apparently unconscious as if he were drawing out a witness to tell his story in his own way, for the entertainment of judge and jury, “I suppose after you had told him that, the captain was anxious to see the apples you had brought him?”

“That’s just what he was, sir,” said Joe, gleefully; “and it almost made me ery to see how much he did enjoy them. I ain’t sure but I did ery a little,” he added, wiping swiftly away a briny reminiscence of the occasion. “You see, he sent for them to be brought up to his cabin—there were ten bags of ’em, and about two bushels or two and a half, in each bag. The bags were n’t very new, but they were clean, and ’Cindy and Daddy Waugh had fixed them up good and strong. It would have made you laugh to see the passengers

stare when four of the hands, every one with an old, patched tow-bag on his shoulder, marched up the brass steps of the gang-way, through the saloon, and into the captain's cabin. Of course, I had to go down to show 'em what to bring, and Tom was so full of curiosity that he followed me up, asking questions, and closed the procession with his white apron. Then the hands went back and brought up the rest. I did n't think a word about it until I heard some of the passengers wondering what it meant, and I thought I should have to laugh or die. I held in, though, until the hands got the apples in the cabin and went out, and then I laughed; and when I told the captain, he laughed, too. It was awful funny—that big pile of bags in the middle of the captain's nice cabin!

“We opened the bags, and I showed him the different kinds, and told him how Daddy Waugh had picked 'em out of ever so many bushels, having them put on the table before him, and looking 'em over one by one, so 's to be sure

and get the very best; and how he 'd put a lot of hay in the bottom of the wagon, so that they would n't get bruised or specked bringing 'em to the harbor, no matter how mellow they might be. It did seem as if the captain enjoyed 'em enough to pay for all the trouble, and more too. Not that it seemed any trouble, because he's been so kind and good that there would n't anything seem trouble that we could do for him. After he had asked all sorts of questions about the different varieties, and examined and praised them until I felt red-hot all over, he sent for the steward, and told him to have them taken out and pile them all up on the tables before he set 'em for dinner. He said there was a big load of passengers on, and he was going to give them a chance to see something they would n't forget that year, anyhow. The steward and the boys took and wiped the apples all off bright and clean, and piled them in the middle of the tables in great big heaps, with little pyramids along the sides of the plates. By the captain's place the pile was so high, that when anybody

sat in his chair those at the table could hardly see his head over the top. They were red and yellow and green and white; russets and greasy-skins and red-cheeks and gold-flesh. There were twenty of the best sorts and the best of every kind. I tell you they did look nice, just as if the Queen had sailed through an orchard, and all the apples had been shaken off on the tables!"

"No doubt—no doubt," said the lawyer, amused at the boy's enthusiasm. "I wish I had been there to see."

"That's queer, now," said Joe; "but when he was looking at the tables, just before the gong sounded for dinner, Captain Moxom said, 'By George, I wish Marvin was here!'"

"You don't say? What the mischief did he want of me?"

"Do n't know, sir."

"Nor I, either." The lawyer was evidently perplexed. "Guess he must have been thinking of this matter." He nodded at the papers on his table, as if they were somehow responsible

for his perplexity. "Well, you had a nice dinner, did n't you?" •

"Yes—that is—I suppose so," replied Joe, hesitantly.

"Suppose so? Do n't you know?"

"Yes—but—"

"But what?"

"Why, you see the captain told me to stay in his cabin during dinner, unless he sent for me, which, of course, I did, and presently I heard more noise down in the saloon—that's where they eat, you know—than I ever heard before; but I could n't make out what it was. First I knew here came Tom—that's one of the colored waiters, a great friend of mine—rushing up the cabin stairs three or four steps at a time, hollerin' for me, his apron twisted clean around behind, and looking as if he was crazy.

"'Joe, Joe!' he called. 'Come quick,—the captain wants you!'

"With that he grabbed me up, and clapped me on his shoulder before I knew what he was doing, and rushed back down into the saloon,

where the passengers were eating their dinner. When we got there I looked around, and everybody was standing up, and the captain—he sits at the head of the middle table, you know—was standing up, too, all dressed in white duck, with an anchor worked on the corner of his collar. He motioned Tom to put me down by him. Then he took me by the hand, and told me to get up in a chair.

“‘Do n’t be afraid!’ he whispered; and I told him I was n’t. Then he turned towards the tables, and said:

“‘Ladies and gentlemen, this is Joe!’

“Then the gentlemen gave three cheers, and the ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and the captain said, ‘Make a bow, Joe!’ and I bowed to each one of the tables, and he said, ‘The ladies and gentlemen have bought your apples, Joe. Go and thank them.’

“Then they passed me around down one side of each table and up the other. The gentlemen shook hands with me, and talked mighty nice, asking all about Daddy Waugh, and the ladies

asked me about 'Cindy, and some of them wanted to kiss me!"

"Gad, I do n't blame them," said the lawyer, jumping up and blowing his nose with peculiar energy.

"Nor I, either," exclaimed Mrs. Marvin, throwing open the door to the living-room, which she had left ajar, and, running across to Joe, made her words good by kissing him half a dozen times.

"Well, mother," said lawyer Marvin, rubbing his eyes and laughing, "as you have n't any boy of your own, I do n't know as I blame you. I believe I should have kissed Joe myself, if you had n't happened around just in time. I see what 'Old Ironsides' wanted of a lawyer now. Thought he'd get me to make his speech for him. The rascal! And if I'd been there, just as like as not I'd lave done it, and no doubt made a mess of the whole thing. So he sold the apples, did he?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, the tears standing in his eyes, "he sold those very apples I'd

brought him, to the passengers at a cent apiece! Only think of it, Mr. Marvin—and gave all the money to me.”

“That was a wholesale piece of business, was n’t it?”

“Yes, sir; and some of them would n’t take any change; so I’ve got fifty dollars more to pay on the mortgage.”

“But had n’t you better keep some of this for yourself, and let the rest of the mortgage stand a while?” asked the lawyer, with a queer twinkle in his eyes.

“I do n’t want anything, and have n’t any use for money until after that mortgage is paid off, and Daddy Waugh a free man, Mr. Marvin,” said Joe, decidedly. “I can’t bear to think of him feeling all the time as if he was just chained down by it, and if he should die before it was paid, I do n’t think I should ever get over it. It does n’t seem as if he’d ever enjoy himself in heaven if it was n’t paid off before he died.”

“I’m not sure he would,” said Marvin,

cheerfully. "Mother," addressing his wife, "supposing you get your things on, and we'll drive as far as the Hip-roof, and see about some of these matters. Perhaps Joe will let you have a basket of apples to pay for those kisses you gave him."

"O, they're paid for already," said the comely matron, smiling.

"Well, then, perhaps you can get a peck or so for some that are not paid for." The lawyer put his arm around his wife's ample waist, and drew her fondly towards him. "How would that suit you, Joe?"

"Just as you say, sir," was the saucy reply. "I'm under your orders, you know."

Chapter XIII.

AN INDENTURE.

THE surprise of the denizens of the Hip-roof House at Joe's return was only equaled by their curiosity. The presence of the lawyer and his wife restrained their comments; but, despite this, Joe was subjected to a fire of questions, to which he could return no satisfactory answers. He said he had gone on board the Queen, made the passage to Buffalo, and started back the next night, with what might be termed sealed orders to Mr. Marvin.

"You say you do n't know what the captain sent you back for?" queried Killis Waugh, peering through his glasses in evident perplexity.

"Do n't know nothing about it," answered Joe. "Just obeyed orders."

"Ye did n't have no trouble with him, I hope?" anxiously.

"Not a word."

“I ’m glad o’ that. How long be you goin’ to stay?”

“Have to ask Mr. Marvin. I ’m under him now.”

“Well, well, well,” said the old man. “That Davy Moxom does beat all. He always was an odd chicken, but this ’s a little the queerest thing he ’s ever done. After all, there ain’t many better men in the world than he. You won’t ever get very far wrong, my son, as long as you do what he tells you.”

“You may well say that, Mr. Waugh,” assented Mr. Marvin. “Joe brought me a letter from Captain Moxom, in which he has charged me with a pleasant duty. It may require the presence of witnesses, and I would be obliged if you would have the men who are at work in the orchard called for that purpose.”

Her heart dimly presaging evil from these words, Cindy went to summon Wellman and the other neighbor. When the little family were mustered and seated with curious expect-

tancy, Mr. Marvin, taking a bundle of papers from his pocket, said:

"I am authorized by Captain David Moxom to offer the sum of ten dollars a month and board for the services of Joseph Thompson during the next five years, the said Joseph Thompson to be at all times subject to the orders of Captain Moxom, provided such arrangement be agreeable to Mr. Waugh. What do you say to that offer, Joe?"

"I want to stay with the captain till I have a boat of my own," said Joe, stoutly.

"I'm bound he'll have it, too," chuckled Wellman, approvingly.

"And what do you say, Mr. Waugh?"

"Is it year in and year out?" asked the old man, with plaintive earnestness.

"Twelve months in a year," answered the lawyer. "Captain Moxom requires the boy to be regularly indentured to him until he is twenty-one. That will be five years, I think?"

"Yes, sir," answered Joe, "five years and 'most a half."

"O, I can't have Joey gone all the time," said Daddy Waugh, petulantly. "He's been away all summer—for the week he's been home do n't seem a day scarcely—an' now to have him go off for five years,—it do n't seem as if I could stand it, nohow. It do n't, Mr. Marvin. 'T ain't likely I'll be here as long as that."

"It is hard, Daddy Waugh," condoled Well-man; "but you must think of the boy. It'll be the making of him, most likely."

"Yes, I'm thinkin' of him, an' I know it's a great chance—a great chance. It's a man's wages almost to start with, and nobody knows how much favor afterwards. I realize that, an' he ain't nothin' but a boy! That's what you mean, neighbor, and that's what everybody'll say if he do n't go. But that's just where the rub comes—because he is a boy yet. Davy Moxom's a good man, and would n't mean him to git no harm; but it's takin' him away from home, away from me, and it's all I've got left, him and 'Cindy. I can't bear to think o' separatin' 'em; they've always been just like

brother an' sister. Do you think you could stand it, 'Cindy? There, there, do n't cry, child, do n't!"

The girl wiped her eyes with her apron, but her voice was choked with sobs as she answered bravely:

"I—I—s'pose we must—must think of Joe, grandpa."

"Of course," assented the old man in a petulant voice; "but who knows it's best for him to go 'way from home five years on a stretch at his time of life?"

"I do n't s'pose the cap'n would want him the whole time right along on a stretch," suggested Wellman.

"P'raps not—p'raps not," said Daddy Waugh, eagerly. "Do you s'pose he'd let him come home now and then for a spell, Mr. Marvin?"

"I'm not authorized to make any such conditions; but I think you can safely rely upon Captain Moxom's good sense and good intentions," answered the lawyer.

The old man sighed.

"More 'n likely he did n't think on 't. Folks do n't know how lonesome old people git towards the last. There 's so little left 'em, you know, they hang on to it desperately. I s'pose I 'll have to consent for the boy's sake. I do n't know as I 'm doin' right, though. He ought to be at school now. These five years that 's comin' should be the cream of his life. It is n't as if his father was alive. Perhaps I ought not to let him go, after all?"

"O, do, Daddy Waugh, do!" entreated the boy. "You know I could n't go to school if I staid to home; and so long as I 've got to work, I 'd rather be with the captain than anywhere else."

"There 's some sense in that, too. Perhaps I am selfish, though I do n't mean to be. Yes, I consent—though I do n't think I ought to, nohow. If it was my own kin, I 'd feel different about it—not so distrustful like, you know."

"Well," said the lawyer, "since that is settled, we may as well have these articles signed,

binding Joe to the captain until he comes of age."

It was done, Daddy Waugh signing as guardian. To 'Cindy the loss of so many years at school seemed irreparable, and she wept silently while the papers were being signed. The men congratulated the boy, and Mrs. Marvin tried to console the girl, who sorrowed at her playmate's good fortune because she knew that without education he would not make the man she had hoped he would become.

"And now," continued Marvin, "I have also to inform you that Captain Moxom writes me to say that he has sold two hundred bushels of apples from the Hip-roof orchard, at a dollar a bushel, to be delivered on board the Queen within ten days."

"Why, that'll pay the mortgage clean off!" exclaimed Killis Waugh, with eagerness.

"So it will, if you've got the apples."

"There's no doubt on that score," said Wellman. "There'll be as many as that and more, of the very first quality."

"Then I'll pay the money, which he sent for the purpose, trusting there will be no delay in the delivery of the apples."

"O, there won't be any delay," said Joe, eagerly. "I'll attend to 'em, myself."

"You forget you are articked to Captain Moxom, and must obey his orders hereafter," said the lawyer, counting out the money. The old man watched him with anxious eyes, his fingers working nervously.

"Aha!" laughed Barnes, "ain't so much fun bein' a sailor, is it? I b'lieve I've got a chance to pay you back for that mule joke. Been havin' a grudge against you ever since."

"I did forget," admitted Joe, cheerfully. "But it do n't make any difference. If I can't do it, Mr. Barnes and Mr. Wellman 'll see it's done just as well, and probably better, too, than I could."

"That's so," said Barnes, getting up and taking the boy's hand in a hearty grip. "You've got a good chance, Joe, and everybody 'll expect you to make good use of it. I

don't know of anybody in the neighborhood that wouldn't do any sort of little turn that comes in their way to help ye. You jest go 'long, and Lank an' I'll 'tend to the apples all right. Ain't that so, Lank?"

Wellman nodded, repeating an assurance which the glimmer in the boy's eyes warned him might not be unnecessary.

"O, Joe's all right. He ain't goin' to worry. We could send the whole lot in two days if we had the barrels."

"There's no trouble about barrels; they are plentier than apples this year," said the lawyer. "And here's the money, Mr. Waugh."

Killis Waugh for a time made a pretense of counting the bills. His lips quivered, and the tears ran down his withered cheeks.

"Mr. Marvin," he said at length, in a voice husky with emotion, "do you happen to have that mortgage along with you?"

"Certainly; I thought you might want to see it."

"Yes; I would like to look at it. It's hung

over the Hip-roof House so long, that it's e'en a'most broke the ridge-pole." The old man's voice was tremulous and hurried. "And now I'd like to see it paid off—canceled and destroyed. I'd like to see it done, an' sleep one more night without dreamin' of it. How much is there due yet?"

"Here it is," said Marvin. "You can see for yourself. It won't take you long to make out, if you are as quick at figures as you used to be."

"That time's past," answered the old man, in a saddened tone, as he laid the bills on the table and unfolded the mortgage. "I declare, it's been so long since I saw an instrument of this kind, I hardly know where to begin."

He glanced at the top of the page, and went rapidly down, reading a few words here and there, and now and then making a remark in regard to what he read:

"This indenture, made the tenth day of November, that was the time—jest a year after Lowizy's death, to a day. I thought on't at

the time, an', if I 'd had any sense, would n't have signed such a paper at such a time. One gravestun with that date on it is enough. 'The Hip-roof House place'—that 's what the lawyer put in, Mr. Marvin. He said for premises so well-known as these, that was a better description than metes and bounds could be. Suppose it is?"

"Well, it 's good enough; it held."

"To have and to hold," muttered the old man. "Yes, it held. It would have held whether it was right or not, for Killis Waugh signed it 'with full knowledge of the contents thereof, and for the purposes therein set forth,' and that was enough. But it won't hold any longer. How much is due? Where are the payments? O yes, here they are. Interest, sixty dollars; total, one thousand and sixty; credit, \$100, \$150, \$75, \$20, \$10, \$6. It came hard then, Mr. Marvin, but it keeps goin' on year after year; now the intrust ahead an' then the credits. Every time I got a dollar, you see, I put by a part for the mortgage, if it was n't

more 'n a dime. That 's the way I tried to pay it. But I would n't never have got rid of it, if it had n't ben for Joe—him an' 'Cindy—never. What 's that? What does it mean? David Moxom? 'Paid off, and discharged'—you 're not making sport of me, Mr. Marvin?"

The old man looked beseechingly into the lawyer's face.

"There 's no deception, Mr. Waugh, though I confess I can not understand it. I received a letter from Captain Moxom, by Joe, directing me to release the mortgage, and inclosing a power of attorney for that purpose."

"How did he come to have anything to do with the matter?"

"Who, Moxom? Why, he owned the mortgage."

"So it seems; but what I want to know is, how he came to own it?"

"Ask me something easy," said the lawyer, jocosely, "and do n't expect me to account for David Moxom's freaks. All I know is that sometime ago I got a letter directing me to

satisfy Perkins, and take an assignment in my own name. I did so, but the same day assigned to Moxom. I've no fancy for this new notion of a lawyer holding titles for his client—always feel as if I was in a dead-fall when I do it."

"But how about the pay, Mr. Marvin. I do n't understand. According to my calculations, interest an' all, there was close on to two hundred dollars yet to pay."

"Something better than a hundred," answered Marvin, carelessly. "But you see the receipt attached. There's no mistaking that: 'By cash received by Joseph Thompson, balance in full of mortgage on the premises of Killis Waugh, known as the Hip-roof House, which is hereby declared to be thereby satisfied and released.' That was drawn by a lawyer,—no doubt about that, for it is signed, sealed, and witnessed, so as to make it a good, formal release of a deed. No mistake about it, Mr. Waugh."

"But how could Joe pay him?" asked the puzzled old man.

"Perhaps he can tell you; I can't."

But if the others were surprised, Joe was astounded.

"How about the apples he sold on the boat?" suggested the lawyer.

Joe blushed furiously.

"He gave me all the money he got for them. I said I did n't want it—that Daddy Waugh had sent him the apples, and I was afraid he would n't like to have 'em sold for our benefit that way. Somehow it seemed too much like taking up a collection. Then he told me it was the passengers' own proposition; that they bought the apples instead of eating them for nothing, to show they liked the way we'd done, and that I was to have the money and do as I pleased with it. I said, of course, I'd pay it on the mortgage; but he kind of smiled, and asked me what I'd do with it if I found that was taken care of already. Had n't I better take it for books and schooling? I told him I could manage about that without much trouble, being a boy, but 'Cindy wanted ever so much

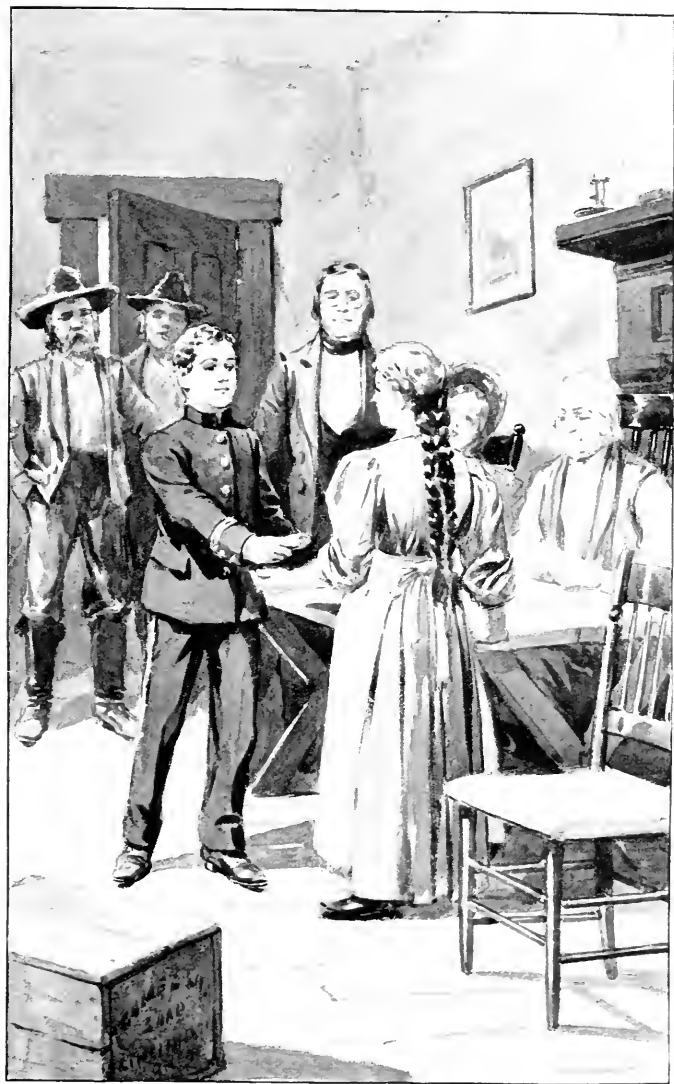
to go to the academy. Then he laughed and said:

“‘All right, but you are the stubbornest boy I ever saw. Give it to ‘Cindy, and shift for yourself, if you want to. I’ve no doubt she’ll make good use of it, and it won’t hurt her.’ So I brought it home, and there it is,” he added, awkwardly thrusting a little package into the girl’s hands.

“And how does he come to send this money on the order for the apples still in the orchard?” asked the old man, peevishly. The day’s marvelous events were beginning to bewilder him.

“O, I forgot,” said the lawyer; “his letter says that one of the passengers, who was a grocer, offered to take the apples at a dollar a bushel at the harbor, the apples to be according to the samples Joe had brought. He paid the money down for two hundred bushels, and will take all you have at the same price, and be very glad to get them.”

“The Lord be thanked,” ejaculated Killis Waugh, raising his eyes devoutly. “It does



The Indenture Signed.

See page 196.

seem as if our troubles were indeed over. And it 's all owing to you, Joe—you and 'Cindy," correcting himself, and taking a hand of each. "You 've done it all, and kept me from giving up when I was cast down. The good Lord bless you both."

"And Captain Moxom, too, daddy," said Joe.

"And Captain Moxom, too," added the old man, with deep emotion. "It 's the Lord's doing, and seems like a miracle; but blessed are all them that do His will, and all them that, in our adversity, have shown us favor!"

"Amen!" ejaculated Wellman, who, being a Methodist, could never restrain the inclination to respond.

A hush fell on the little company. It was broken by Joe's voice:

"Daddy, I do n't think you ought to call it a miracle. Seems to me just as natural as sowing and reaping. You were kind to others when they wanted help, and they 've been kind to you when you needed it."

"Joe is right," said the lawyer; "it is the rule, not the exception."

"As ye sow, so shall ye reap," quoted Wellman, with rugged emphasis.

"In other words, you invested in good-will on a rising market, and got your money back with interest," said the more practical lawyer.

"Big intrust, Mr. Marvin, big intrust. I'm only sorry Lowizy ain't here to see, for it's all due to her. I should n't ever have done anything decent if it had n't been for her. But I expect she knows—she knows—all about it."

There was a solemn silence. The hired men stole softly out to their work; the lawyer and his wife prepared to depart. The old man received their congratulations with peaceful humility. When they were ready to go, Joe began to bid good-bye, also.

"Why, where are you going?" asked 'Cindy, in surprise.

"Going with Mr. Marvin," answered Joe.

"What's that?" questioned the lawyer, in a tone of good-humored banter. "Going with

us? Do you hear that, Mrs. Marvin? You do n't object! Well, I suppose not, but I do. After the demonstrations I have witnessed to-day, my dear, I beg to be excused from assuming the responsibility of this young man. Excuse me, Joe, but as the captain has put you in my charge, I hand you over to 'Cindy. Make him toe the mark, my dear, and if he shows any signs of insubordination, just report him to me, and I will notify the captain, and have him ordered to sea instanter; or, if you prefer, I will come over any time you may wish, and give the rascal a rope's end, to make him behave. Do you hear, young man?"

"Yes, sir," said Joe, doubtfully, "but—but—how long?"

"How long are you to obey her? Until further orders from the captain, sir."

With a ringing laugh the lawyer turned to depart; then changed his mind, and, coming back, laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, and said:

"Do n't let this turn your head, Joe. There

is n't but one Dave Moxom in the world, and you may live to find he's rotten at the core. I don't know; we lawyers see surprising things, but not very many of this kind. As you are now indentured to Captain Moxom, he has, of course, to board and find you. I am directed to get you a decent suit of clothes—none of these sailor togs—and arrange for your board and schooling this winter. You will attend the academy this winter with 'Cindy, and she will keep close watch on you, so that I can report to Moxom how you are getting along. I suspect he wants to make a man of you, and knows he can't do it without her help. He has an idea you are not over-fond of study, and will need her to keep you up to your work. You are each to come and spend a Sunday with us every month—that is, you are ordered to, and 'Cindy is invited to—so that I can not only quiz her about you, but judge, myself, of the truth of her report."

"O, Joe will do his very best, I am sure,"

said 'Cindy, her face aflame with joy, as she put her arm about his neck. "Won't you, Joe?"

"I—I'll try," said Joe, somewhat doubtfully.

"I know it will be hard, Joe," said the lawyer, kindly; "harder than the hardest work, perhaps, to one of your nature; but everything worth having costs effort, and the only way to keep friends is to make them glad to be your friends."

"I'll try, sir," said the boy, humbly, biting his lip.

"Daddy Waugh," continued the lawyer, "is going to take the money I shall pay for your board, and hire a girl to keep house, so that you and 'Cindy will have nothing to distract your minds from study. Perhaps he will think he is able to get a colt that will be gaining in value as he grows older, and something to drive him to, so that you can take 'Cindy to school when the weather is bad. He owns a good stall back of the church, which other people have been

using for a dozen years. You could keep the horse there without costing a cent. Now, if you do n't do as well as everybody expects—"

"O, I will—I will!" cried the boy, burying his head on 'Cindy's shoulder in a passion of tears.

"Mr. Marvin," said Daddy Waugh, "please go away! We can't stand so much of the Lord's goodness all at once. Do n't you see?"

The tears were flowing down the old man's face.

"O, you 'll probably get trouble enough to make up for it," said the lawyer, who was probably a lineal descendant of one of "Job's comforters;" "but I'm not going till you promise me one thing."

"What 's that? I'll do everything you say."

"How long has it been since Deacon Waugh went to church?"

"Five years," said the old man, solemnly; "it's five years since I died, you know. A man in my condition can't go to church. It's bad

enough to be so nigh helpless, without going out and making a show of one's self. Besides, Mr. Marvin, you know I have n't been able to dress fit to be seen in the church, nor had any way to get there."

"That 's not so any longer," said the lawyer, cheerfully. "Wellman would be glad to take you—"

"I 've offered to a hundred times, Squire," said that worthy from the door. "But you know how 't is; a man do n't like to go where he 's like to have remarks made about him. There 's many a man, and woman too, stays away from church because they have n't clothes they think are good enough to wear in such company."

"You see, Wellman would be glad to take you," said the lawyer.

"But Hank 's a Methodist," said the old man. "I have n't any claim in him."

"There ain't any Methodist nor Baptist, nor anything in good neighborhood," said Wellman;

“and if you have had misfortunes, you’ve always had good neighbors, Deacon Waugh,” said Wellman.

“That I have! that I have!” said the old man, humbly bowing his head.

“And I think,” said the lawyer, “the whole town would turn Presbyterians, just for one day, to see Killis Waugh sitting by Joe and ‘Cindy in the old pew again. I know I’d be glad to step across the street and carry one side of his chair down the aisle.”

“Would ye, now?” said the old man, wistfully. “I’ve more’n half a mind to take ye at your word—both on ye.”

The lawyer drove away with a light heart, and peace rested on the unincumbered Hip-roof House. Word came from the captain, approving all that had been done, and urging Joe to the closest attention to study, in order to be prepared for a position much more onerous than that which he had previously occupied.

The parcel business, the captain wrote, had

developed quite beyond anticipation, and it was possible he might not command the *Queen* the next year, as there was talk of organizing a new business, which would be under his charge. He promised that he would stop on his way up the lake after the season closed, on condition that he should not be thanked for what he had done. So far as the money already paid was concerned, he insisted that the business accidentally established through Joe's faithfulness and activity had much more than reimbursed the owners of the *Queen*, and in consideration of this fact, they thought of christening their new business, "The Joe Thompson Express Company." As for what he proposed doing, the captain declared that was only "a private investment in the future of a boy," on which he expected great profits.

Though the company was not named after Joe, it was duly established after some years; and, after David Moxom ceased to be the captain of the *Queen*, came to be known to two conti-

nents as well as he had been by his passengers; being noted always for the same qualities, reliability, and dispatch.

Neither want nor the fear of want ever came again to the gentle owner of the Hip-roof House, whose cup of joy was full to overflowing, when on Thanksgiving-day, David Moxom sat again at his humble board. It was a homely but bountiful repast he had driven ahead of the stage to partake of with his grateful friends. Joe worshiped his hero in silence, and 'Cindy served them—a blushing Hebe, of whose beauty the captain of the Queen often thought when his mind recurred to his investment in the future of the occupants of the old Hip-roof House. Perhaps it had been better if he could have forgotten.

THE END.



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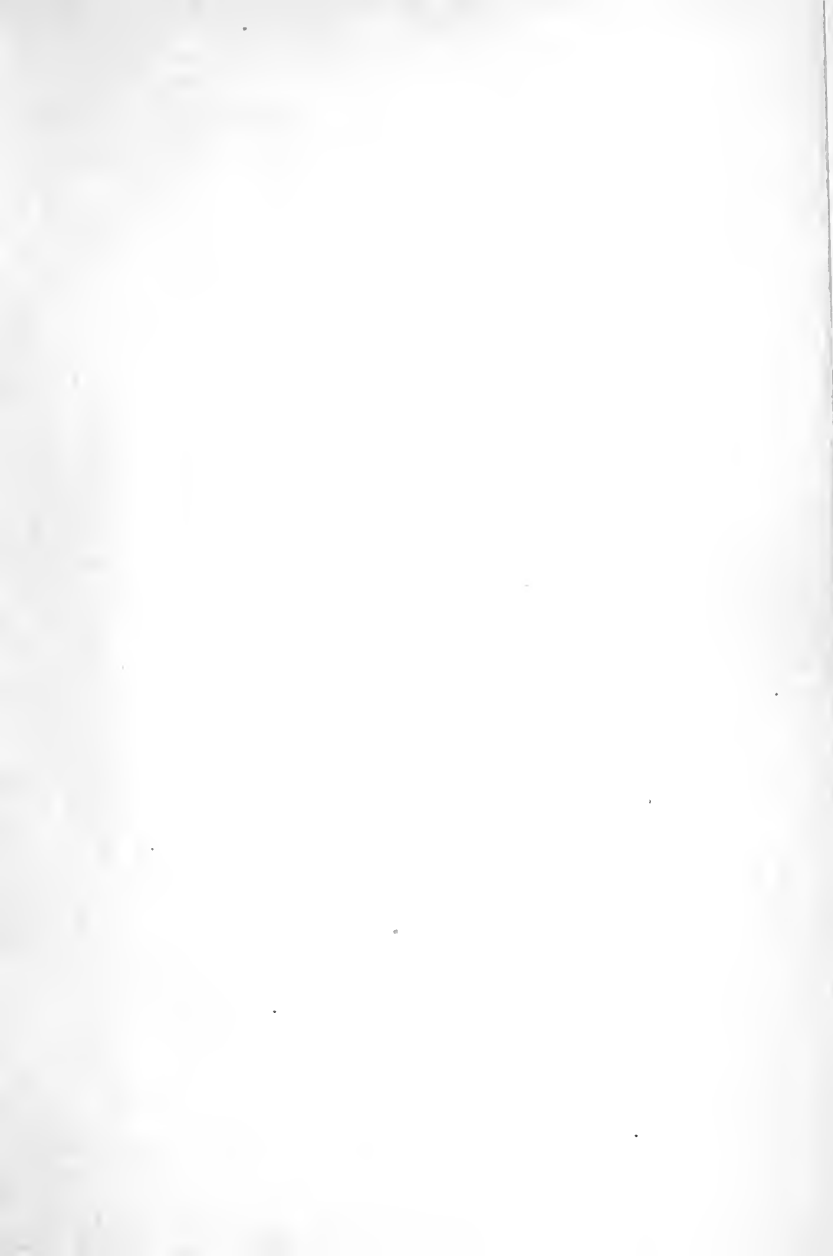
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